AFTER THE BATTLE

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THE SHETLANDS

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CONTENTS

THE SHETLAND ISLES
Early Shetland 1
The First World War 2
The Second World War 4
Sullom Voe 10
Wartime Recollections 10
Scatsta 12
Sumburgh 14
The Shetland Bus 16
READERS' INVESTIGATION
The Strongest, Bravest and Best 22
UNITED KINGDOM
Island Farm Camp 28
Camp 198 29
Camp 11 35
The Empty Years 38
IT HAPPENED HERE
Devastation at Darwin 40
WRECK DISCOVERY
Find the *Bismarck!* 47

Cover: Wartime relics in the Shetland Isles still to be seen today include the 6-inch guns on Vementry and the remains of a Catalina from No. 240 Squadron which crashed on Yell on January 18, 1942. (Ron Hogg/Chris Barker)
Centre Pages: The remains of the longest boom net in the world. Safely isolated from redevelopment on the western side of Darwin harbour, fragments of the supporting cable, its weights and counter-weights still march across the tidal platform into the sea. (Dr Stephen Dyer)
Back Cover: One of the alluring naked ladies left behind by the German prisoners-of-war at Island Farm Camp in South Wales. Unfortunately, in more recent times, Cora has had parts of her anatomy touched up by unknown hands! (Jeff Vincent)
Acknowledgements: Jeff Vincent would like to extend his grateful thanks to the many people who helped him in the preparation of his article on Island Farm Camp: PC Reginald Dodson, Mrs Elgiva Thomas, Mrs Ted Lees, Helmuth Geuttler, Mr S. P. Harding of the former Blue Bird Cafe, Mr and Mrs Picton-Turbervill of Ewenny Priory, Matthew Barry Sullivan, Colonel Clements, Colin Hunt and Len Taylor.

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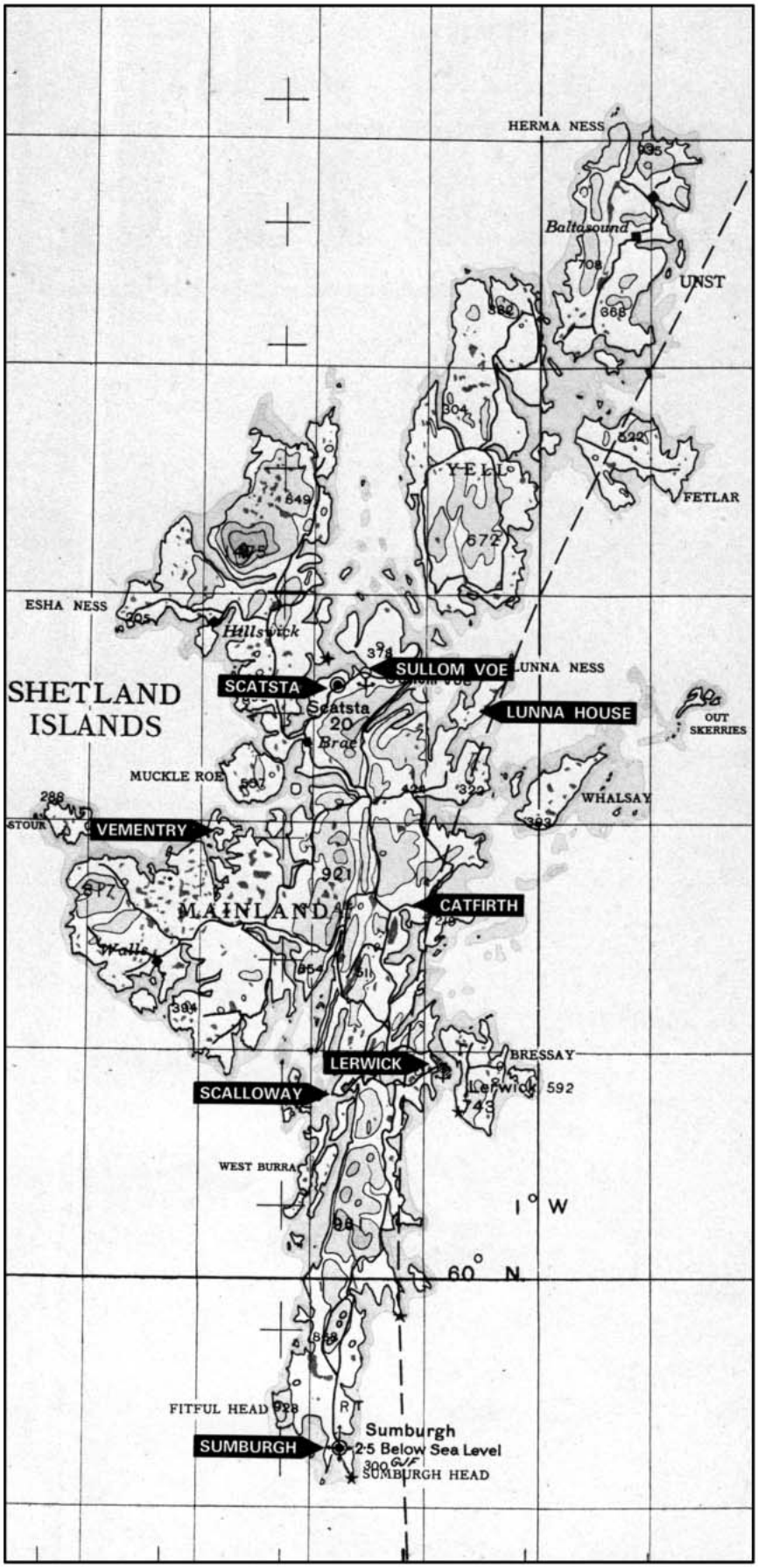


The Shetland Isles. This extract from GSGS 4369 Sheet 1 1:500,000 RAF (War) Edition shows the line (dotted) of magnetic variation at 12 degrees west as in 1942. The two RAF airfields — Scatsta in the north and Sumburgh on the southermost tip — are shown as is the seaplane base at Sullom Voe and anchorage at Lerwick. (Reverse patches are ours, indicating pertinent features in Ron Hogg's story.)

THE SHETLAND ISLES

By Ron Hogg

Ask anyone where the Shetland Islands are and they will probably be able to tell you that they are a group of islands somewhere to the north of Scotland. What is not generally appreciated is just how far north the islands lie and that the northernmost point, Muckle Flugga, is over 600 miles from London and perhaps television weather charts which usually show Shetland to be somewhere in the Moray Firth must bear responsibility. There are over 100 islands in the Shetland group with fewer than 20 inhabited and they cover an area over 70 miles long and 35 miles wide, Fair Isle and Foula excluded. The capital town of Lerwick has a population of approximately 18,000 and is situated on the largest of the islands. It is not generally appreciated that at 61°N, Lerwick is at the same latitude as Anchorage in Alaska and Leningrad in Russia.

The culture of Shetland is basically Scandinavian and this is reflected in the local dialect, words of ancient Norse and in place names. The traditional Norse Festival of Up-Helly-Aa which takes place on the last Tuesday of January each year also serves as a reminder to link the community with the Scandinavian past. The Up-Helly-Aa festival takes place to mark the end of the long mid-winter celebration of Yule and includes torchlight processions and the burning of a Viking galley. The custom can be traced back to Uphalliday, which was one of the pagan Norse festivals adopted by the pre-Reformation Church in Scotland.

While the islands of Shetland do not immediately spring to mind as a place of some past battle or indeed any major outstanding part in historical conflict, they have however, for some time occupied a position of paramount importance to the defence of the British Isles. The development of the North Sea oil fields gives the strategic importance of the Shetland Isles an even greater significance which has been duly noted by the advent of NATO exercises in the area.

EARLY SHETLAND

Despite the relatively remote position of Shetland and its island format, it has been determined by archaeologists that there have been settlers from at least 1500 BC in the Neolithic or late Stone Age. There have also been various other colonisations since this time but there is no certain evidence that our old friends the Romans visited the islands. It is known that the Roman General Gaius Julius Agricola advanced Roman power northward and visited the adjacent Orkney islands in AD 83. It is also known that his fleet sailed around the north of Scotland confirming that Britain was an island, but his recall to Rome in AD 85 prevented further excursions to more northern latitudes.

Defences old and new. Clickhinin Broch *(above)* **overlooking Lerwick is one of the most ingenious and impressive defence works of prehistoric man in western Europe. Unique to Scotland, the Orkneys and Shetland, they were erected by Iron Age tribes circa 6th-5th centuries BC. Most of the 500 known sites are merely grassy mounds but Clickhinin, excavated between 1953 and 1957, is one of the best preserved.** *Top:* **Of a more recent era, the anti-tank dragons' teeth at Spiggie Loch near Scousburgh were erected when a seaborne landing against the islands appeared very imminent.**

View of the island of Vementry from the mainland Swarback Munn. The First World War deep water anchorage is on the right.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Shetland was situated a long way from the trenches of France in the First World War but it was not untouched by the conflict. Two Shetland companies of The Gordon Highlanders were posted to France at the outbreak of the war and took part in various battles around the Somme. Heavy losses were suffered at the battle of the River Ancre and, during later regrouping, the Shetland companies could not be reformed due to the small number of survivors. These survivors were later posted to other units of the Scottish division and the special Shetland units were not reformed again.

With their close contact with the sea it is not unexpected that this was the Shetlanders' major contribution to the war and some 3,000 islanders served in the Merchant Navy with another 1,500 men serving in the Shetland section of the Royal Naval Reserve.

Although Shetland's loss of over 500 soldiers and sailors during the conflict is small compared with the vast losses which were common at this time, it should be remembered that these losses were proportionately greater than those inflicted on any other county in the British Isles. The loss of so many young islanders could only retard development of the islands in later years.

The WWI gun position overlooking the deep water channel on the left. There were no fixed defences on the islands in 1914 but in August 1915 HMS *Gibraltar*, an old cruiser, was sent to act as guard and depôt ship for the base. By 1917 it was decided to mount two 6-inch guns on the shore to cover the entrance more effectively than could be done from the moored cruiser. In June 1917 the salvage steamer *Glenogle*, fitted with sheerlegs on her bows, arrived at North Voe. An endless wire was run up to the top of the hill and pit props were used to roll the equipment up to the site. Together with the three other batteries, set up at Lerwick, Bressay North and Bressay South, the guns were manned by Royal Marines.

The islands themselves played an important part in the war for, as the English Channel was heavily guarded and mined, the only access to the Atlantic for the German fleet was to the north or south of Shetland. Shore batteries equipped with 6-inch guns were established on Bressay and on the headland of Knab to guard the harbour of Lerwick. Six-inch guns were also emplaced on the island of Vementry to protect the deep water entrance channel to Swarbacks Minn where the 10th Cruiser Squadron was established. This squadron consisted of armed liners and fast destroyers and was used to patrol the northern seaways intercepting enemy shipping. Swarbacks Minn, which is an inlet off St Magnus Bay, was also used as an advanced naval base for the Home Fleet based at Scapa Flow in Orkney.

The convoy system was introduced in March 1917 and heralded considerable activity on the seas around Shetland. Ships from all parts of Britain were escorted to Lerwick before crossing the North Sea under escort. In less than one year 4,500 ships sailed from Lerwick but this was considerably reduced when the U-Boat problem had been overcome.

Assistance in overcoming the U-Boat menace at the time was given by the introduction of seaplane patrols from Catfirth similar to the patrols introduced in southern areas of the North Sea with seaplanes operating from Felixstowe. A 90-acre site was utilised as a new seaplane base at Catfirth sometime prior to March 1918 and one seaplane shed and two slipways were constructed. Remains of the slipways and buildings can still be seen. Aircraft based at Catfirth were Felixstowe F3s of No. 300 Flight, RNAS and Curtiss Large American flying boats of another unrecorded squadron. The Felixstowe F3 was one of Britain's best flying boats of the First World War and frequently referred to as the flying battleship because of its size and armament. Developed from a Curtiss design by Commander J. Porte, RN, the design was for an anti-submarine and patrol bomber armed with four Lewis guns and four 230lb bombs. Top speed was in the region of 93 miles per hour at 2,000ft with four crew and fully loaded. Its endurance of up to 9½ hours was of considerable use in its long-range patrol activities.

Plans were prepared for expanding the Catfirth site in 1918 and included building five more seaplane hangars with a repair depot to be operational in early 1919. However these plans were shelved with the advent of the Armistice in November 1918 and, although construction work is believed to have started, the site was abandoned and the planes removed south. Considering the remoteness of the site and the stage in development of aircraft at this time, the achievement of maintaining an operation of this magnitude is astonishing. The regular air patrols liaising with the Grand Fleet were a constant harrassment to the German Navy and were a critical factor in securing the exit route for German shipping to the North Atlantic.

It is also recorded that experiments took place at this time in the use of hydrophones to detect submerged submarines. The method of use was to land the seaplane in the suspect area and lower a microphone into the sea. Underwater sounds could then be detected by the operator. Over sixty years later the system is still with us in the more sophisticated form of Sea King helicopter and dunking sonar!

The Felixstowe F3s in service at Catfirth were probably part of a batch of 36 seaplanes (numbers N4000 to N4035; built by Short Brothers Ltd or from the 50 seaplanes built by Dick Kerr Ltd. Records show that four seaplanes at Catfirth in October 1918 were numbers N4232, N4405, 9807 and 9810. The seaplane N4232 was constructed by Dick Kerr Ltd and N4405 was of Phoenix Dynamo Ltd construction. Both 9807 and 9810 were Porte Baby flying boats.

The present day site of seaplane base is windswept and desolate, an indication of the difficulties that must have been experienced in setting up the seaplane base facilities during the World War One period. The original seaplane slipway can still be seen and several of the original buildings.

Although the fire control point has deteriorated somewhat through the years, there is very little sign of vandalism or graffiti — no doubt due to the remoteness of the site and the fact that the island is uninhabited.

Catfirth today — windswept and desolate — but once an important seaplane base during the battle against the U-Boat in WWI.

The 7th Battalion, Black Watch, activated from its Territorial Army status, first sent its 'A' Company to the Shetlands in December 1939 to be joined by the remainder of the battalion the following June. Here the skirl of the pipes wafts across Sumburgh airfield. In the background is Seafield House, known locally as Hamars Brae. The army 'marched in' to the house, owned by Mr J. B. Leslie, on January 22, 1940 and 'marched out' on August 21, 1942 when it was transferred to the Air Ministry. Situated at the end of the runway, they promptly had it knocked down as it was considered a hazard, its tiles having already been knocked off the roof a number of times. Demolition of the obstruction must have been a relief to aircrews and occupants alike! (IWM)

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

In the early part of the Second World War it was believed that invasion of the British Isles was imminent and, although the most probable route by the enemy would be via the English Channel, the Norway-Shetland-Orkney-Scotland route could not be ruled out. The occupation of Shetland would have presented a number of immediate advantages to the German forces, these being a forward base for harrassment of the British Isles, securement of the exit route to the North Atlantic from the North Sea and elimination of the convoy and convoy escort facilities and services provided by the Royal Navy and RAF from Shetland. The large Royal Navy base at Scapa Flow, Orkney would also become untenable if Shetland was occupied by German forces.

It was with these points in mind that the decision was taken to reinforce the Shetland defences. The 7th Battalion, The Black Watch recently actuated from its Territorial Army status was deployed to Shetland in this rôle, the Battalion War History, compiled by Major D. F. O. Russell, C.B.E., MC, TD, DL, records the transition of the battalion from its peacetime territorial status.

In common with most territorial battalions, the majority of the members of the 7th Black Watch were called-up on Monday, August 28, 1939, previous to the declaration of war. Men were kitted out at the drill halls and detachments were detailed for guard duty at a number of vulnerable points in Fife and Perth. These included the north and south approaches to the Forth Bridge, the

Left: **The Black Watch transferred to the close defence of the airfield early in 1941. Their camp can be seen behind the Blenheim in the background. (IWM)** *Right:* **Today they have been replaced by the army of oilfield workers, riding to their duties in helicopters. Kilts are no longer in evidence, the uniform of the day is now the orange survival suit.**

The scene *(above)* of men of the 7th Battalion setting up barbed wire entanglements around their camp at Pool of Virkie has now drastically changed *(below)* following the construction of a new entrance road to Sumburgh Airport running through the former camp area. (IWM)

RAF airfield at Leuchars and the general headquarters at Kirkaldy.

The battalion was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel R. H. Robertson, with Major H. K. Purvis Russell Montgomery as second-in-command and Captain I. T. Buchanan as adjutant.

Fife did not have long to wait for its first taste of war, as the very first raids on this country were made on October 16 and primarily at the Forth Bridge. Several smaller raids were also made in the area over the next weeks but damage was mainly minor except for one direct hit on a ship in the Firth of Forth, the crew suffering a number of casualties. The battalion therefore had an early experience of the conflict that was to take place during the following years.

On October 23 the battalion moved to Callander in Perthshire where it was stationed until the beginning of December when a composite company which eventually became 'A' Company was sent under the command of Captain Buchanan to the Shetland Isles. The second-in-command, Major Montgomery, also left to form a Shetland Defence Battalion, 'A' Company being one of the companies of that battalion. It was a composite battalion, consisting of one company 7th Black Watch, one company 11th Argylls and three companies from a Home Defence Battalion of the Highland Light Infantry and Scottish Rifles. Towards the end of May 1940 the rest of the battalion prepared to move to Shetland.

When the battalion stores were packed and the train parties almost ready to leave, the code-word 'CAESAR' was received. Being in a mobile counter-attack rôle with invasion scares rife, the battalion was supposed to be ready at short notice to move wherever directed. 'CAESAR' was the code-word for such a move and coming at such a moment was to say the least most inconvenient. However, after a certain amount of panic, the order was withdrawn and the first part of the battalion left Callander on May 27, the remainder on June 1, both parties embarking from Aberdeen.

The advance party arrived in Lerwick on May 29 and the main body followed on June 2. The parties were welcomed and conducted to their various camps by members of 'A' Company, who were by this time old inhabitants. Billets at this time were not very satisfactory as most of the men were under canvas but by the beginning of winter practically everybody had been moved into Nissen hut camps or other buildings. There were no proper roads in the camps and the mud became almost impassable even on foot.

Soon after arriving in Shetland the adjutant, Captain Howard, left and 2nd Lieutenant J. P. Herd held the post of acting adjutant until the arrival of Captain I. D. M. Wilson.

For operational purposes the battalion was part of LERFORCE, which was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Robertson, and consisted of heavy and light anti-aircraft sections, the 7th Black Watch, a searchlight detachment of the Royal Artillery, one company, Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, a detachment of REs, a RASC detachment, and a detachment of RAOC. The task of this force was firstly, to hold Lerwick and Lerwick harbour against any attack from the sea, and secondly, to hold it against attack from enemy troops who might be landed to the north and south and attack from the interior. For the purposes of the first rôle, the docks were fortified with barbed wire defences and machine gun posts, and for the second there was an inner defence line of posts and wire actually round the perimeter of Lerwick. Further out, stretching in a half circle from coast to coast round

Visiting officers view the Ness of Sound from a position in the Robertson Line — the defensive perimeter around Lerwick — in April 1942. At the time, the principal buildings in this area comprised those used by the army camp in the centre, and the coast artillery at the head of the Sound, strategically placed to defend the entrance to Lerwick harbour on the left.

Lerwick, the battalion dug and constructed what came to be known as the Robertson Line. Whether or not these defences could have been held against a determined German attack, no one can say, as they were fortunately never required and, although the intention was merely to hold Lerwick until reinforcements came from the mainland, it is doubtful whether a force of this size would have been successful in accomplishing even this limited task. Later on, 'A' Company were sent to Scalloway on the west coast nearly due west of Lerwick as this was considered a possible landing place. To assist in the internal defences of Lerwick, there was a curfew imposed on the whole population from 11 at night until 4 o'clock in the morning, and to enter the dock area every civilian required to be in possession of passes, these being issued by the Naval Officer in Charge, Lerwick.

Naturally, the troops on arrival, having had it impressed upon them that they were now in an operational area and were liable to attacks at any minute, were keyed up and enthusiastic, with the result that instructions regarding the recognition lights to be shown by vessels at night were taken very literally. On one occasion at least, the naval patrol boat was fired upon by two Bren gun posts as it was not showing the correct recognition lights. During the whole of the stay in Lerwick there were continual alarms of landings and enemy raids, on each occasion, 'Stand-to' was ordered in varying degrees according to the magnitude of the supposed threat, but after repeated alerts, when nothing happened, enthusiasm waned. One or two German planes appeared, mostly on reconnaissance flights, but one on a strafing raid shot up a platoon out on training, wounding one man.

Shortly after arriving in the Shetlands, large reinforcements from the 50th Battalion enabled a fourth company — 'D' Company — to be formed. Equipment at this time was not lavish and the arrival of individual items such as the second 3-inch mortar for the mortar platoon caused waves of excitement. A particularly notable day was in September 1940 when the cargo ship *Atlantic Coast* arrived at Shetland with the complete G1098 stores and the bulk of the battalion transport. At long last the battalion was able to shed its requisitioned transport which had always caused a lot of trouble.

During the stay in Lerwick there was a visit from General Wanchope who inspected the defences and spoke to most officers and many other ranks. There was also a visit by the Earl of Elgin, Lord Lieutenant of the battalion's home county of Fife and President of the Fife TA Association.

The weather at this time was particularly cold and wintry and frequent rum issues were authorised from Brigade HQ, in fact so frequent that the brigade commander, getting rather tired of the many requests for rum, authorised a tot every day until further notice. Fortunately for the battalion, this order was not withdrawn until almost a year later, by which time the 3,000 gallons of rum which had been taken over by the QM on arrival had been almost completely consumed!

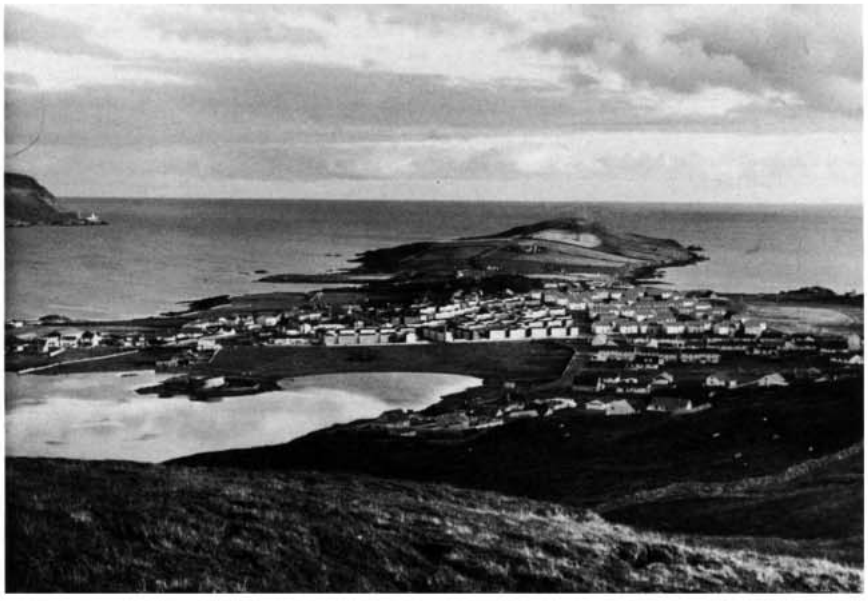
With the rum stocks in Lerwick depleted, it was time to move on and from January 6 to 10 the battalion marched by companies from Lerwick to Sumburgh, a small village and aerodrome on the extreme southern point of the Shetlands, a distance of about 27 miles. This march was the longest that most of the men had done in one stretch and some found it hard going. 'A' Company returned from Scalloway on March 27 and 'D' Company was sent back to Lerwick on March 4 to assist in the harbour defences. Billets in Lerwick were handed over to the 7th Seaforths, who arrived to take over the defences of Lerwick. The billets at Sumburgh were fairly well constructed Nissen huts, mostly close to Sumburgh, though one company was at Scousburgh and one at Tingwall. The countryside was extremely desolate and rather depressing, although it did not take long for the men to settle in and find many new friends in a country which seems to abound in eggs, milk and meat. Battalion HQ and the Officers' Mess were in Seafield House, a fairly large stone-built house directly opposite the end of the main runway of the aerodrome. The house was apparently a menace to the RAF and was nearly hit several times by planes taking off. Later it was pulled down.

The operational rôle of the battalion was firstly the defence of the aerodrome and secondly the defence of the approaches and beaches to the north of the aerodrome, with a third rôle of counter-attack on the aerodrome if captured.

Shortly after the arrival of the battalion, there was a very heavy snowstorm, most unusual for the Shetlands, and many of the roads were blocked. For nearly a week the whole battalion were employed in digging out the roads to enable supplies and mail to come through from Lerwick.

The defending forces of Sumburgh were slightly stronger than at Lerwick and included two platoons of the 8th Gordons who were machine-gunners.

During the period in Sumburgh there were a great number of invasion scares which required Stand-to at different times, and patrolling of the beaches and defences. The 'powers that be' changed their minds on several occasions, and for one period patrols



The guns have been removed and the camp replaced by a modern housing development. Clickhinin Broch (see page 1) — before and after excavation — can be seen in both photographs just left of centre on the small peninsula.

This photograph was taken from the same viewpoint as the Ness of Sound and shows the south section of Lerwick with the island of Bressay to the rear. Hayfield House, standing in its own grounds, can be seen in the centre. The building was taken over for the Army HQ on Shetland during the war, and at the time was relatively isolated. Cunningham Way, the military road constructed on the orders of Brigadier J. C. Cunningham, the OC Shetlands, to bypass Lerwick can be seen on the lower right climbing the hill to the left front, and the Robertson Defence Line.

were sent out along the beaches in misty weather, when a surprise invasion was feared most, and at other periods patrols were mounted on clear nights which were considered to be more suitable for an enemy landing.

Training at Sumburgh was fairly extensive, consisting mainly of mining and wiring the defences, practising manning the defences, and exercises in counter-attacking the aerodrome. In addition, route marches, company exercises and training schemes were carried out each week, and several officers' and NCOs cadres were also run. More transport was received in the battalion, and the transport officer was able to train a number of drivers, both in driving and maintenance work.

For recreation there was the usual football and the battalion ran a Sports Day. An inter-battalion football competition was played between the 7th Black Watch, 7th Seaforths and 9th Green Howards, which created a fervour of good hearty rivalry. Twenty-four hour passes were in operation, when most men went to Lerwick, and for those so inclined there was some good fishing and snipe shooting. The pipe band also provided entertainment, and both at Lerwick and Sumburgh it beat Retreat on several occasions in ceremonial dress, much to the interest and enjoyment of the civilian population. The CO always took a very keen personal interest in the activities of the band, and at Sumburgh presented them with a very fine drum major's mace and also made a donation towards the purchase of a pipe banner. The RAF also had facilities which they put at the units' disposal, in the way of cinema shows, dance bands and concerts.

During the stay in Sumburgh there was a most intensive period of visits that the battalion ever experienced, starting in May with a visit from the Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces, General Sir Alan Brooke, KCB, DSO. Two days later the GOC-in-C. AA Command, Lieutenant-General Sir F. A. Pile, Bt., CB, DSO, MC and with him the GOC 3rd AA Division, Lieutenant-General H. G. Martin DSO, OBE, GOC, Orkney

Left: **Brigadier Cunningham on the steps of Hayfield House in April 1941. With him is Major Beer of the Royal Artillery and his wife, an officer in the ATS. (IWM)** *Right:* **The shine has gone from the steps of the Hayfield Hotel today.**

and Shetland Defences, Major-General J. C. Kemp, MC. The day after, the GOC, Scottish Command, Lieutenant-General A. F. A. N. Thorne, CB, CMG, DSO, and Major-General H. M. Gale, in charge of administration Scottish Command visited, and in June the Hon. Colonel of the 7th Black Watch, Lieutenant-Colonel P. M. G. Skeene, OBE. In August, General Wanchope came again. There was also a visit from the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Rev. Dr Hutchison Cockburn.

At the beginning of September, preparations were in full swing for the relief of the battalion by the 11th ASH. The officers gave a sherry party, inviting all their many friends from the whole of the Shetlands, which turned out to be a most successful occasion. The advance party left on September 10, the battalion leaving on the 24th going to Lerwick by road and embarking there for Invergordon, being piped off the island to the tune of the *7th Black Watch's Farewell to the Shetlands* composed by Pipe Major Davidson.

Subsequent to their time in Shetland the 7th Battalion Black Watch took a leading part in the North African, Sicilian, Italian and European campaigns. Their route from Shetland took them to Alamein, the Mareth Line, Messina, Normandy, Caen, Eindhoven, the Rhine and to Frelsdorf, north Germany, where the battalion took over the 115th Panzer Grenadiers' supply dump on VE-Day.

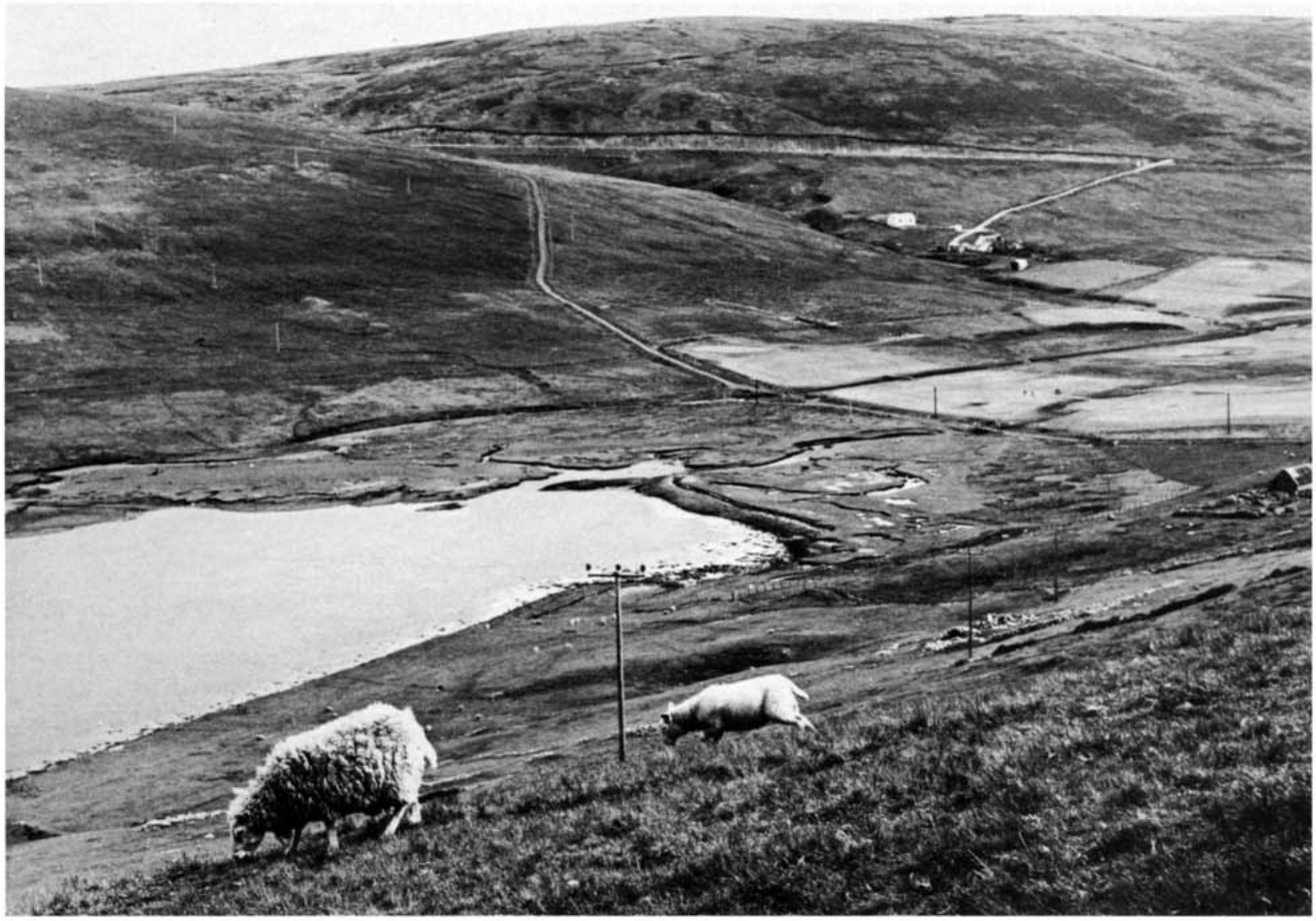
Until quite recently evidence of the 7th Battalion's stay in Shetland could still be seen. The Sumburgh airfield defences were in a dominant position overlooking the runways, and had remained unmolested for many years. However, the recent rapid expansion of the airport and the increased

Left and below: **Troops of the 7th Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders, leave their camp at Veensgarth Farm, about five miles north of Lerwick, for training. The date in April 20, 1941 and the troops are ready for rapid deployment in case the islands are attacked.**
Above right: **Although Bren Carriers no longer rumble along the road to the farm, lorries frequently use it, delivering and collecting materials for the concrete block factory constructed on the old camp site.**

A few yards east of the road junction to the farm, our photograph captures the moment when two off-duty guards from the nearby Securicor office enjoy a stroll in the sunshine where once armed troops set out from their nearby camp for daily training. Amazingly, the tree has thrived despite the harsh Shetland winds.

With bayonets fixed, troops carry out exercises at Dales Voe, just north of Lerwick, in April 1941. These exercises were frequent and intensive but are now replaced by more peaceful pursuits — the efforts of local golfers on their new course.

building in the area has taken its toll of the WW2 remains. Nissen hut bases of the Black Watch camp north of the runways could still be seen but a new road now runs through the area of the old camp. The Scousburgh camp site is still clearly defined and can be viewed from the roadway going up the hill to Scousburgh radio station. Oil-related developments have also taken their toll of WW2 historical remains in the Lerwick area but parts of the Robertson Line to the west of Lerwick can still be seen. When visiting the area one can easily imagine the difficulties in constructing and manning the line. Major Russell, who was signals officer at that time, confirms that weeks were spent laying miles and miles of underground cables but they were always getting cut, frequently by the local peat cutters gathering fuel. Overhead cables were continually damaged by high winds and it was only with the greatest difficulty that a workable communications system was maintained in the line. Major Russell's strongest memory of the area is the continual dampness when everyone was covered in peat mud more or less from head to foot. A road was also constructed at this time by passing Lerwick and lining the Robertson Line defence positions. Although now almost nothing more than a track it is still known locally as 'The Military Road'.



SULLOM VOE

While there were numerous other military camps and establishments the remains of which are sometimes still in evidence perhaps a better known area is that of Sullom Voe.

In August 1939, the supply ship *Manela* anchored in Sullom Voe to take up its role as HQ, No. 100 Wing, RAF Coastal Command. The first flying boats, which were Saro Londons of No. 201 Squadron, flew in in August and three of them, numbers K5260, L7041 and L7043, flew the first patrol of the war from Sullom Voe on September 4, 1939. No 201 Squadron was based at Sullom Voe until August 1941, although the main body of the unit was at Invergordon from November 6, 1939 until May 26, 1940 re-equipping with Sunderlands. Nos. 228 and 240 Squadrons also had detachments at Sullom Voe in the 1939-40 period and were equipped with Sunderlands and Londons respectively.

Duties were regular anti-submarine patrols, air-sea rescue and convoy escort. Aircraft in use included Sunderland I, II and III, Walrus, Catalina I and IV, Canso (Catalina IVA) and Northrop N3 PB.

Convoy escort duties were long and tedious and frequently involved routing to Grasnaya in north Russia. Items of interest from the station records include the arrival of an Arado 196 on April 17, 1940. This aircraft had been captured in Kristiansand, Norway and later left Sullom Voe to go south for evaluation with a Walrus escort. On March 23, 1941 at 11.34 a.m. two Bf 110s flew over at 200ft and bombed and machine-gunned Sullom Church, the village and the supply ship in the Voe. One of the aircraft was shot down by a Bofors gun sited on Sella Ness, and it crashed into the sea killing the crew of two.

WARTIME RECOLLECTIONS

Group Captain W. G. Adams, RAF, Retd., and Norman Boynton, former RAF navigator recall the days of the flying boats at Sullom Voe.

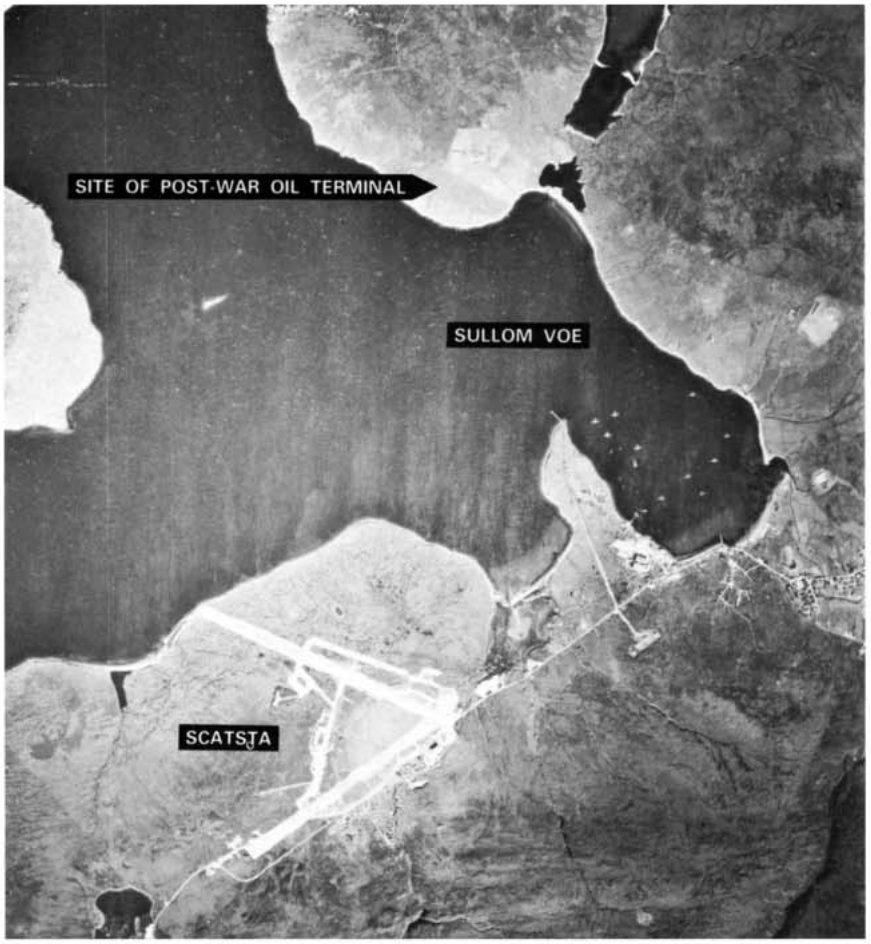
'My term of office as Commanding Officer, Royal Air Force, Sullom Voe during the last war was short — from February 1942 to May 1942. I also commanded a flying boat squadron there from April 1941 to September 1941. My experience of Sullom Voe under operational conditions was not long although impressive. I spent some ten months there altogether.

'It was in March 1939 that I was sent to Sullom Voe to look at it as a potential flying boat base. My first impression was of a personal nature, thinking what a desolate spot at which to serve. From an operational point of view, however, it had its potential as a sheltered base with tactical advantages. There was nothing then except the odd croft — no trees, no grass but plenty of sheep.

'As the war started, Sullom Voe was selected for the operation of flying boats. Moorings for them were laid and a flying boat squadron was "housed" in a merchant ship called the *Manela*. She was a floating base in all respects. Later accommodation and facilities were built ashore and even today the remains of the hangar, Nissen huts and the slipway are still in evidence.

'By the time of my first wartime arrival with my squadron in February 1941, the shore base was established. Contrary to my first impression, it was an operational station of high spirit and camaraderie, where everyone played his part to "dig-in". We had a self-made golf course, a farm, good messes, cinema, canteens, etc., all of which promoted a high operational standard. I was not disappointed at all in being sent there again the following year as Commanding Officer. We had great assistance from the Shetlanders and enjoyed the hospitality of Lerwick when we could get away.

German air intelligence photo from April 1940 of Sullom Voe seaplane base.



By 1944 the expanded facilities included Scatsta aerodrome, built just to the south-west, this picture being taken by the RAF on August 18.

'Our task, of course, was within the overall plan of Headquarters, Coastal Command. It consisted of reconnaissance, anti-submarine patrols, convoy escort, etc., and occasionally searching for German capital ships in Trondheim, Narvik, etc. in Norway.

'During the winter months, the weather was a bit troublesome from a purely flying point of view. Radio aids were not available as today and often returns from patrols were made to Invergordon, particularly at night. Gales, no cloud base and bad visibility frequently prevailed and the hours of darkness were long. During the summer months the situation was almost reversed.

'I recall the occasion of a reconnaissance of Spitsbergen by a long-range Catalina from Sullom Voe. It did a 24-hour route but it was aborted because of fog there. Six hours after misfortunes earlier in the year and waited for the air attacks which later came to be known as the Battle of Britain. I had just finished training as a RAF navigator and had been posted to Coastal Command to join No. 204 Squadron at Sullom Voe flying Sunderland flying boats. Our first attempt to land at Sumburgh was abandoned due to bad weather — a prelude to the kind of weather that was to become familiar to us. However, on September 2, 1940 I landed at Sumburgh and travelled by road to RAF Sullom Voe.

'The base was a collection of Nissen huts beside Yell Sound and accommodation was so limited that many RAF personnel had to live aboard an old ship moored offshore.

'At Sullom Voe were two squadrons of Sunderlands, at that time the largest aircraft in the RAF having four engines and double decks. Because of their heavy firepower from gun turrets fore and aft and side gun positions they were known to the enemy as 'flying porcupines'.

'Some of the aircrew slept aboard the boats, as we called them, rarely spending the night ashore. To see these very large aircraft swaying at their moorings, nose into the wind, it was easy to imagine large sea birds resting on the water.

'I was soon crewed-up with an excellent team, the Captain having many thousands of hours flying time to his credit from pre-war service with Imperial Airways, and on September 4, 1940, I was off on my first operational flight. We always flew in the same aircraft, N9024, and I sometimes wonder what happened to her after I left Shetland.

'After the early morning call, we would get up in pitch darkness, go out to the aircraft by dinghy, clamber aboard and sort ourselves out before the marvellous sensation of taking off from the water, hustling across the wavetops before getting into the air. The flights were mainly over the Atlantic and were long and tiring — anything up to 13 hours duration — on convoy and anti-submarine duties. Then we would return to base, again perhaps in pitch darkness and sometimes by way of an overnight stop at Oban or Invergordon.

'Crews rarely left the base and we found most of our entertainment on the camp. Our off-duty periods were spent in the Sergeants' Mess or the NAAFI canteen and we played cards, darts and invented a birthday for someone as an excuse for a "duty free" party. The cheerfulness and comradeship of the RAF personnel is something I particularly recall.

'The highlight of our stay in Shetland was a visit to Lerwick for an evening out. We found the Shetlanders very friendly.

The incredible sight in 1980 with the massive oil terminal spreading itself across the former virgin site north of the flying boat base.

return to the Voe and with the same crew it was airborne again and this time was able to complete the task successfully, after 25 hours flying. That crew had flown for 49 hours out of the last 55 — with only two landings.

'Sullom Voe also saw RAF flying boats en route to north Russia.

'An amusing incident occurred when the Orderly Room Flight Sergeant was completing his periodical demand for stationery supplies. The indent form sought notification of the nearest railway station, to facilitate delivery. To this request he replied — "Bergen".'

Norman Boynton, based at Sullom Voe during the war, recalls that 'the press reports of development of the oil terminal there are a poignant reminder of events of long ago, yet still vivid in our memories. They are a memory of long dark nights, long and tiring reconnaissance flights and the spontaneous hospitality of the Shetland people. I went to the Shetlands in 1940 when Britain was recovering from the military

'Lerwick was, of course, full of Merchant Navy men and they had my utmost respect and admiration for the work they were doing. I had seen small ships out in the Atlantic gales and having to contend with U-Boats. I was quite overcome when I first saw a large merchantman break up and go to the bottom. These were the men who shipped in the fuel that kept the RAF in the air.

'My short stay at Sullom Voe ended in November 1940 when I left to join my new squadron at Wick.'

One point which may be worthy of note is that Group Captain Adams mentions that Sunderland flying boats were moored into the wind at Sullom Voe. From experiences of First World War seaplanes when they were tethered into the wind, it was possible for them at times to lift like kites in a high wind. High winds are a normal part of life in Shetland and it is believed that it was normal practice at Catfirth in World War One to anchor the seaplanes tail to wind to avoid this occurring.

Scatsta aerodrome was constructed to provide a base in the north of Shetland for fighter aircraft to give close support against German air attacks from Norway. This picture shows the 'drome looking from the south-east in April 1942. (IWM)

SCATSTA

While Sullom Voe was used by Coastal Command as a base to patrol the North Atlantic and North Sea, it remained a challenge to German air superiority in these areas. Occupation of Norwegian airfields brough Sullom Voe within easy reach of their attack aircraft and, at the onset of war, the only defences were anti-aircraft guns on ships moored in the Voe. Subsequently, anti-aircraft guns were positioned on land around Sullom Voe but this did not deter further attacks and it was decided to provide an

Two runways of 1,400 and 1,510 yards respectively, on headings of 130 and 250 degrees, were laid down, each 50 yards wide. This picture was taken looking almost due south showing the airfield in January 1978 just prior to its redevelopment. Save for the construction of an American LORAN station at the far end of the NW-SE runway, Scatsta had seen little activity since being derequisitioned at the end of the war before North Sea oil brought new prosperity to the islands.

airfield for fighter cover rather than rely on Sumburgh airfield at the south of the island.

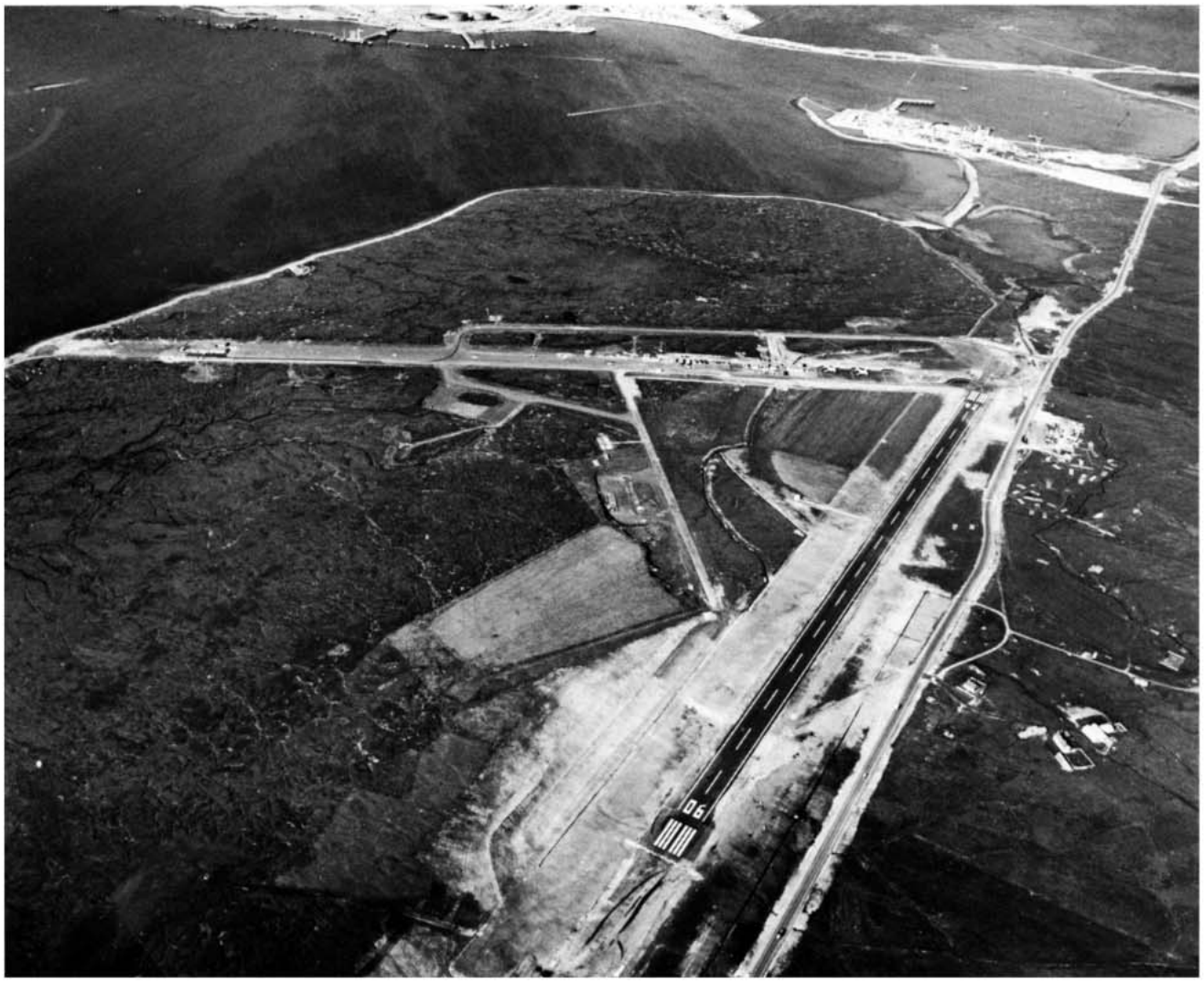
Construction of Scatsta airfield began in the spring of 1940 and continued right through to 1943. Two runways were laid down with perimeter tracks and bases for hangars. The construction was carried out by Zetland County Council as the main contractor for the Air Ministry Works Directorate with the council carrying out the engineering works with hired plant comprising scrapers, wire rope face bucket excavators, dumpers and haulage. The production of hardcore and bitumen surfacing was carried out by Messrs Alex Robertson & Co. Ltd. of Dunfermline using a high percentage of local labour. The first runway was completed in about April 1941 and was immediately put into use as a forward base for the fighter aircraft normally based at Sumburgh and as an emergency landing ground for Coastal Command aircraft. It was also used for communications aircraft for the flying boat base.

One claim to fame by Scatsta is its use in relation to the bombing attacks on *Tirpitz*. In October 1944, the *Tirpitz* was at Tromso in northern Norway, 200 miles nearer to Britain than its previous base at Kaa Fjord. It now became possible to reach her directly from the British Isles and return. Thus Operation 'Obviate' was launched with Lancasters of Nos. 9 and 617 Squadrons, modified to include an additional 300 gallons of fuel and with their mid-upper turrets and armour plating around the pilot's seat removed to reduce weight. Thirty-two Lancasters left Lossiemouth at one hour after midnight on October 29, 1944 and were routed over northern Scotland. Each Lancaster carried a Tallboy bomb and the attack, while resulting in no hits, was successful in bending the *Tirpitz's* port quarter propeller shaft with a near miss. Alternative emergency landing facilities were provided at Yagodnik and Vaenga in north Russia and at Scatsta where refuelling and supporting facilities for up to 40 Lancasters had been set up — no mean feat considering the remote position. Two Lancasters 'P' and 'T' of No. 617 Squadron are recorded as using the facilities at Scatsta on their return from Kaa Fjord after carrying out their attacks.

Early on the morning of November 12, 1944, 32 Lancasters again took off to attack *Tirpitz* near Haakoy Island, Tromso. Unmolested except for anti-aircraft gunfire the attack was carried out at 9.49 a.m. when 29 bombs were dropped with great accuracy, from between 12,500 and 16,000ft achieving two direct hits. *Tirpitz* rolled over to port and capsized. This operation was codenamed 'Catechism' and, as for the previous 'Obviate' mission, emergency landing facilities were provided at Scatsta. It is not clear from the record whether two or three Lancasters used these facilities but certainly at least one Lancaster successfully landed and took off again with its Tallboy still on board after refuelling. This plane was probably one of the two from No. 9 Squadron that were late at the rendezvous and returned without dropping their bombs.

Scatsta airfield was in regular use until the end of the war and the list of aircraft types having used it reads like *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*.

Used only occasionally by civil aircraft after the war, the airfield remained dormant except for the landing of a US Coastguard Hercules on May 24, 1969, in connection with the LORAN station which had been established there. It might have remained inactive thereafter but for the advent of North Sea oil and the resulting pressure on existing facilities at Sumburgh Airport. In 1977 it was decided to utilise Scatsta for traffic related to the adjacent oil terminal then under construction and Shell-BP commissioned Sir Frederick Snow & Partners to prepare a feasibility report on its use for regular charter flights. The report's proposals were accepted and a new runway has now been overlaid on the original one with the remaining old surface being used as shoulders and a stopway at each end. Also over 100,000 cubic metres of hillside were removed to comply with today's regulations. The present-day airfield now has full navigational facilities including GEC Precision Approach Path Indicators and is in full operational use. Terminal buildings have been provided with the origins of the airfield submerged in the rapid developments associated with the oil industry.



On August 15, 1978, the airfield was officially reopened by Mrs F. Hunter of Scatsta Farm. A new 960-metre-long, 23-metre-wide strip had been laid down on the old NE-SW runway, specifically to cater for the HS748 'Budgie' operated by Dan-Air for the oil industry. The other wartime runway was brought into use for aircraft hardstandings and terminal buildings.

In the extreme south, an aerodrome had been established in the mid-1930s just behind Sumburgh Head by Captain E. E. Fresson of Highland Airways. *Above:* **In this wartime shot, the Black Watch camp lies in the foreground with the airfield behind.**

SUMBURGH

Situated at the southern end of the mainland, Sumburgh was the principal aerodrome for the air defence of Shetland during World War II. The station was formed on May 13, 1940 with the Sumburgh Fighter Flight of Gladiators and No. 254 Squadron with Blenheim IVs. Three runways were at that time under construction and camp accommodation consisted of bell tents and marquees with one corrugated iron hangar for the fighter flight. During the early part of the war, various Hurricane, Gladiator and Blenheim squadrons used the airfield. On February 1, 1942 at 3.19 p.m., a Junkers 88C attacked the airfield damaging seven Blenheims of No. 404 Squadron and a Magister. Two personnel were killed and six injured. In another air attack on February 10, a bomb was dropped on the adjacent beach, fortunately without damage.

Then on September 24, 1941, a detachment of Mosquito IVs from No. 105 Squadron operating from Sumburgh attacked the Gestapo Headquarters at Oslo. Aircraft numbers DK296, 313, 325 and 328 took part in this epic operation, DK325 being shot down in the sea near Oslo by an FW 190. Aircraft involved with attacks on the *Tirpitz* also used Sumburgh.

Considerable earthworks were necessary to lay down the three runways which had been completed by the time this picture was taken in August 1944.

A helicopter crosses the site of the old camp beside the Pool of Virkie in the shuttle between the modernised airfield — in the 1970s the fastest-growing airport in Europe — and the oil platforms and drilling rigs.

The 1941 photograph of the C-in-C's plane at Sumburgh has very little in common with the comparison taken from the same position. Airport buildings and facilities have rapidly spread over the wartime airfield. The three ground staff of Loganair admire a visiting de Havilland Twin Otter — modern-day equivalent of the old DH Rapide.

In operational use by the RAF until late in 1945, the airfield eventually reverted to civil use and was used surprisingly by Ju 52s (Jupiter Class) on BEA's internal routes. These aircraft were from a group of twelve captured Ju 52/3 Mig 8es. G-AHBP and G-AHOC to OL and accepted as a stop-gap arrangement due to the non-availability of DC3s. The Ju 52s suffered from low payload and short range and a lack of compatible ground equipment presented immense operational problems. Suitable starting equipment was based only at Renfrew and stops at Sumburgh involved keeping at least one engine running at all times. No doubt BEA were pleased when more suitable aircraft became available.

Today Sumburgh is a modern airport. The original 1,560 yard runway has been supplemented by an additional 1,185 yards but during the 1970s it was still being overwhelmed by the huge growth in air traffic caused by the offshore oil industry. The number of passengers using Sumburgh rose from 94,000 in 1973 to 600,000 in 1978 and the Civil Aviation Authority spent more than £30 million on the new runway, parking apron, new control tower as well as helicopter facilities in an effort to cope with increasing demand.

Anyone involved with the original airfield would be amazed at the contrast of the modern jet planes and helicopters to the Gladiators, Blenheims and the corrugated iron hangar of the early war days, now long gone.

With the threat of invasion very real, soldiers of the Black Watch man a position close to Fitfull Head as part of the defensive measures introduced to protect the airfield at Sumburgh.

During the last ten years many of the concrete emplacements and other defensive structures constructed to defend Sumburgh have disappeared with its extension. This control bunker was pictured by Ron Hogg in March 1978.

'The Shetland Bus' as depicted in the film made by A/S Nordsjofilm in 1954. It was released in Norway titled 'Shetlandsgjengen', but Columbia purchased the UK rights and produced an abridged version called 'Suicide Mission'. Here the fishing boat *Bergholm* crosses the North Sea transporting sabotage material, agents and refugees.

THE SHETLAND BUS

With the advent of the German occupation of Norway, numerous fishing boats loaded with refugees made their way to Shetland. Many thousands escaped by this and other routes to join the Allies but in Norway there remained a large body of men from the disbanded army, disorganised but still willing to make every effort to drive the German forces from their country. It became of paramount importance for the exiled Norwegian government to maintain communications with the potential leaders of this army and, under British direction, to reorganise, train and equip it to harrass the common enemy.

The first necessity in attempting this task was to arrange for regular transport between Britain and Norway. In 1941 British resources had still not recovered from the crippling losses at the beginning of the war and neither aircraft nor naval vessels could be used for work which did not bring immediate results. It was also questioned whether aircraft or naval vessels would be suitable for this type of work. The mountainous country with unstable weather made Norway a very difficult place on which to land by parachute and there was a lack of naval vessels at that time which were both seaworthy enough to make such long voyages in winter and yet small enough to approach the coast with reasonable chance of avoiding detection by the enemy.

However, the fishing boats that had arrived with refugees were certainly seaworthy; they were small, reliable and, if returned to Norwegian waters, it would be difficult for the Germans to distinguish them from similar boats which were still fishing there.

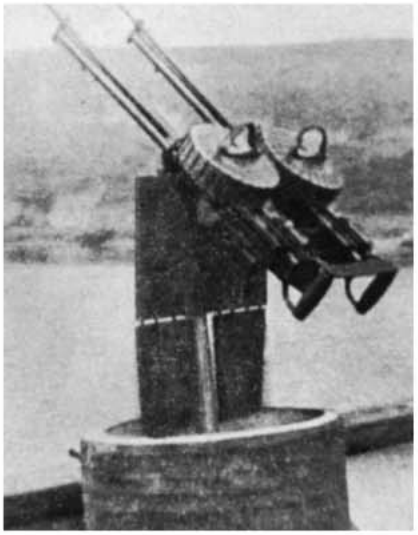
The SOE had set up a base at Flemington in the valley of Weisdale, Shetland, to organise clandestine operations in Norway and the decision was made to use the available fishing boats suitably modified to include a measure of defensive equipment. Most of the vessels were of 50 to 70 feet overall in length with bunks for six to eight men in the fo'c's'le and two bunks in a small cabin aft. The hold amidships would carry a useful eight or ten tons of small arms and explosives and the wheelhouse, which was on top of the single cylinder engine casing, had a small chart room off it with a galley behind. There were few comforts aboard and with a speed of seven or eight knots they were absurdly slow by wartime standards.

Bergen in Norway is situated 180 miles to the east of Shetland and from there the Norwegian coast runs north for 120 miles and then north north east for nearly 1,000 miles to the Arctic zone. It was estimated that any part of this coast could be reached by fishing boats using extra fuel and water tanks where necessary and it seemed, at least in theory, that having reached the enemy coast a fishing boat could easily mingle with the local craft without detection. The continual stream of

The Special Operations Executive (SOE) base on Shetland was located in the remote Weisdale valley, the HQ being situated in the private house — Flemington — in the group of trees in the centre.

refugees flowing from Norway to Shetland brought with them details of all the German orders and controls almost as quickly as the Germans issued them in Norway.

Since the job was to land men and materials in secret, it followed that the occupying forces should be avoided wherever possible. However, the crews were always eager to try their hands in defending themselves against chance encounters and for this reason armament that was invisible except at close quarters was installed in the boats. In the open sea the chance of meeting a German ship was negligible but aircraft were a considerable danger especially near the coastal 50-mile fishing limit. As a protection against machine gun bullets and cannon splinters, the inner and outer linings of the wheelhouses were filled with concrete and half-inch steel plates fitted inside the bulwarks at the bow and stern. A Bren gun was carried in the wheelhouse and could be fired through loopholes provided in the sides. The most successful gun-mounting was one made for twin stripped Lewis guns. These were mounted on a telescopic stand inside an ordinary 40-gallon diesel oil drum, bolted to the ship's deck and lashed, for appearances sake, to the bulwark. The top was sawn off and a removable lid fitted. Oil drums are a common sight on fishing boats, and with the lid on nothing suspicious could be seen, unless a very close inspection revealed the saw cut near the top. When the lid was removed the guns, ready loaded, sprang into firing position for immediate use by virtue of the counterbalance fitted in the hold below. The inside of the barrel was lined with two inches of concrete to give some measure of protection and a folded shield of steel plates unrolled automatically as the mounting rose. Special low mountings for twin .5in Colt machine guns were also installed in the stern net pounds and, by fitting folding handles and shields, the height of the whole mounting could be kept down to two feet. In the same manner, a Colt could be mounted in the bows and, covered with a tarpaulin, it did not look conspicuous. Sometimes augmented by PAC rockets concealed in the roof of the wheelhouse of the boat and numerous sub-machine guns in the hands of passengers and spare members of the crew, the boats could put up a very formidable volume of fire against attackers.



Wolf in sheep's clothing. An innocent 40-gallon oil drum fixed on deck suddenly beomes a lethal weapon.

In the film, original members of the SOE 'Shetland Bus' played their own parts. *Above:* **William Enoksen and** *below* **Johannes Kalve.**

Left: **Lunna House, another isolated location, was taken over when additional facilities were required to service the increasing number of operations.** *Right:* **A convenient slipway in Lunna Voe lay just below the house.**

Increased demand on what came to be known as 'The Shetland Bus' necessitated additional facilities and, during the course of the war, a base was set up at the remote Lunna House in Lunna Voe. From here numerous ships set forth not only to deliver arms and men, but to lay small R-type sea mines in the fjords north of Kristiansand and to transport Chariot two-man submarines to attacks on the *Tirpitz*.

Facilities for the operations were also provided at Scalloway where a slipway was constructed and stocks of arms and explosives were cached in the dungeon of the ruined medieval castle once home of the Earls of Zetland.

In 1943 due to the loss of five boats and 42 men out of the hundred men regularly sailing, it was decided that more suitable vessels for the changing requirements of the war were needed. With the assistance of Admiral Stark, Commander in Chief of the US naval forces in Europe, who was advised of the difficulty in procuring suitable replacement craft, three submarine chasers were obtained. Much bigger than the fishing boats they replaced, the submarine chasers were nearly four times faster at 17 knots. Top speed was 22 knots and they were armed with a Bofors gun forward, two twin Oerlikons in power-operated turrets, a two pounder and two .5in Colt machine guns on the upper bridge. Crews were amazed to find that they came complete with hot and cold showers, refrigerators, electric toasters, typewriters and fur lined coats and boots. The ships proved very effective and operated until the end of the war when two boats openly entered Bergen and Alesund to great rejoicing by the population.

The little churchyard overlooked by the house became the last resting place for at least three crewmen killed while en route from Norway. Norwegians still come to lay wreaths on the graves marked by wooden crosses.

The anchorage at Lunna Voe — then and now.

Additional facilities were provided at Scalloway where the castle (centre) was taken over by SOE for its Norwegian operation.

Remains of WWII structures adjacent to the castle where the dungeons were used for the storage of arms and explosives.

The slipway constructed at Scalloway by Norwegian seamen to facilitate repair work to their boats and enable them to carry out modifications and install armaments. It consists of a metal trolley and rails leading into the water with a cable which turned through 90 degrees into the stone house on the left. Originally the winch was driven by a single-cylinder, fishing boat diesel engine, but in recent years it has been replaced by an electric motor.

Above: **The legendary figure of Lief Larsen (left) with his second-in-command, Arne Arnessen. Larsen commanded the *Arthur* in the attack on the *Tirpitz* using chariots — also known as human torpedoes. The *Arthur* was sunk and Larsen returned to Shetland after making his way overland to Sweden.** *Right:* **As he appeared in the film.**

During the course of the war 206 missions were completed and 192 men and 383 tons of military stores were landed. 73 agents and 373 refugees were brought back from various parts of Norway to Shetland. Many of these refugees were trained military personnel that made vital additions to the Allied forces. A network of 60 radio transmitters with operators was also established.

Lunna House and the surrounding area has changed very little since the wartime period. An oil pipeline from the North Sea has been installed near the house but it is well buried and concealed. The quay from which the boats sailed to Norway is still there and now only occasionally used for pleasure sailing. The church is still in use and the churchyard with Norwegian graves is well maintained. The house itself is a hotel open to residents during the summer months, and a stay there can be a worthwhile experience for a historian if one has read *The Shetland Bus* by David Howarth.

Even during the invasion of Europe, Germany maintained an army of ten divisions in Norway to protect it against any possible Allied attack or insurrection. During the night before Germany capitulated, armed Norwegian troops appeared in every town in the country and accepted the surrender of the enormous garrison. In Bergen alone 3,000 men were under arms, wearing uniforms and carrying guns sent by boat from Shetland. This was made possible by the endeavours of the Norwegian crews but not without the loss of 44 men and ten boats.

Shetland offers the military historian a wide field of study and survey. While I have attempted to direct a line of interest to the more well-known areas such as Scatsta and Sullom Voe, it should not be forgotten that there are numerous other places worthy of a visit. The brochs are well known and easily accessible. Fort Charlotte, the building of which started in 1643, is well maintained and Scalloway Castle dates from 1600. There are also coastal defence fortifications on headlands near Lerwick and Scalloway and the wilderness of World War II buildings at Graven. Dragons teeth still defend Mavis Grind and Spiggie Loch from the dangers that never came. The wild seascape and cliff scenery alone make the visit to the bunkers of the radio station at Voss a worthwhile trip. An expedition to the uninhabited island of Vementry to survey the coastal guns, still pointing across St Magnus Bay, is a memorable experience that will not be forgotten.

SEA TRAFFIC ORGANISED BY SOE BETWEEN SHETLAND AND NORWAY IN 1940-1945

	Voyages		*Into Norway*		*Out of Norway*	
Date	*Sailed*	*Successful*	*Agents*	*Stores in tons*	*Agents*	*Refugees*
By fishing boat						
1940-41	14	10	15	–	18	39
1941-42	43	30	49	117.5	6	56
1942-43	37	19	20	32	2	14
By submarine chaser						
1943-44	34	22	41	21	13	8
1944-45	75	72	94	137.5	33	235

During the 1940-43 period, when fishing boats were used for transport between Shetland and Norway, a total of eight boats and fifty men were lost due to various reasons. While weather was a constant threat, enemy aircraft and coastal patrols also took their toll. As will be seen from the above figures, the advent of the American-built, Norwegian-crewed, submarine chasers signified a successful period in the Shetland Bus saga. With considerable armament and speed, the vessels were not such an easy target for their enemies and there were no losses or casualties during the period when they were in use.

It was thanks to Lieutenant-Commander David Howarth, seen here (centre) with shipwrights at the Shetland base, that the full story of *The Shetland Bus* has been told in his book of the same name.

Regular British Airways flights go to Sumburgh Airport from Aberdeen and flying time is only 45 minutes. P and O Lines have regular sailings from Aberdeen with a roll-on roll-off motor vessel. An overnight journey

delivers you to Lerwick and a car can be hired from there or one can be taken on the ferry.

All necessary arrangements for accommodation and travel can be made through the Shetlands Tourist Organisation at the Information Centre, Lerwick — telephone 0595 3434.

I should like to thank the many people of Shetland who gave their kind assistance and for the information they made available to me including Simon Gunn, Skellister, Ken Welsh of BP, Malcolm Spaven, Mr D. Smith, and Don Storer of The British Aircraft Preservation Council, Edinburgh.

Lerwick, capital of the Shetlands. *Above:* **Army and naval personnel indicate their presence with a profusion of Nissen huts for accommodation and storage.** *Below:* **Several are still in everyday use in and around the harbour.**

Suggested further reading:

The Shetland Bus by David Howarth
Shetland by James R. Nicolson
Shetland and Norway in the Second World War by S. Kodvin
History of the Orkney and Shetland Volunteers by D. Rollo
The Brochs of Mousa and Clickhimin by J. R. C. Hamilton
The Shetland Garrison 1665-1668 by R. G. Ball

THE STRONGEST, BRAVEST AND BEST

By David King & Peter White

In the spring of 1945, Mrs Ivy Clarke, landlady of a small Buckinghamshire pub, sat down to compose what would probably be one of the most difficult letters of her life:

The Prince Albert
High Wycombe

19-4-45

Dear Madam,

My sister has written to your son's wife and I feel that I should like to write to you in order to express our gratitude for your son's life and our deep sorrow that it was necessary he should sacrifice it in order to save us from horrors we are only just beginning to understand. . . .

It seems that only the strongest, bravest and best are able to combat this evil. So never doubt that your son died in a great and necessary cause and that when you meet him again you will have every reason to be proud of him.

I always wake when the bombers are coming home and on this night about 2.30 a.m. I could hear that the engines of one were not right. I went to the window and said to myself over and over again — 'Oh please bail out!' No one did and I shall always believe that it was because one of the crew was injured and so they all decided to stay with him. Had they bailed out the plane might possibly have crashed into our houses but it went down in a wood on the hill just behind our house. We all went immediately but nothing could be done for the crew — they were all killed immediately. . . .

The crash shocked our little village far more than the V-bomb which descended in our midst and I should like to convey to you and all the mothers of your son's crew our sympathy in your loss and gratitude for the lives you created which were sacrificed for us.

Her letter completed, Mrs Clarke made her way to the village post office to send it on its way to Mrs Watson in Ontario, Canada.

The crash which shocked the little village had, in fact, been that of Lancaster RF150, QB-W, of No. 424 'Tiger' Squadron, RCAF, which had plunged into the ground as it attempted an emergency landing at Booker airfield in the early hours of April 5, 1945.

As part of No. 6 Group, RCAF, the 'Tigers' had taken part in some of the heaviest attacks on Germany, and well knew their way to Leipzig, Kiel, Schwandorf, Bremen, Essen and the other cities which featured on Bomber Command target maps.

Among the 'Tigers', based at Skipton-on-Swale, in Yorkshire, was Flying Officer Joseph Watson and his crew: Flying Officer Joseph Rochford, Warrant Officer Stuart Thomson, Flight-Sergeants Curwood Armstrong, Stewart Robinson and Charles Howes and Sergeant Edward Ashdown. A top-ranking tennis player, Watson had enlisted in January 1942, receiving his wings in 1943. After a period as a flying instructor, he was posted overseas in April 1944.

Top: **No. 424 Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force — 'Tiger' Squadron — first flew its Lancasters operationally on February 1-2, 1945. *Piccadilly Princess*, piloted by Squadron Leader Ralph Green, led the raid just two months later in which 'W' for Willie came to grief at Booker.** *Above:* **The squadron had been based at Skipton-on-Swale in Yorkshire since November 1943. In the picture Squadron Leader Green is sitting in the front row, 6th from the left. Flying Officer Joseph Watson, pilot of the ill-fated 'Willie', is 2nd left in the back row.**

Bomber Command was to have a busy time in the last year of the European war. For much of the time the weather was good and there was a big push to get Allied forces over the Rhine, and there were to be days when up to 20,000 sorties were flown by Allied aircraft in an effort to maintain the pressure on the German war industry.

No. 424 Squadron was to be heavily involved in these attacks and, indeed, at one point in March 1945, completed two full sorties against Bottrop and Hanover within a period of 24 hours.

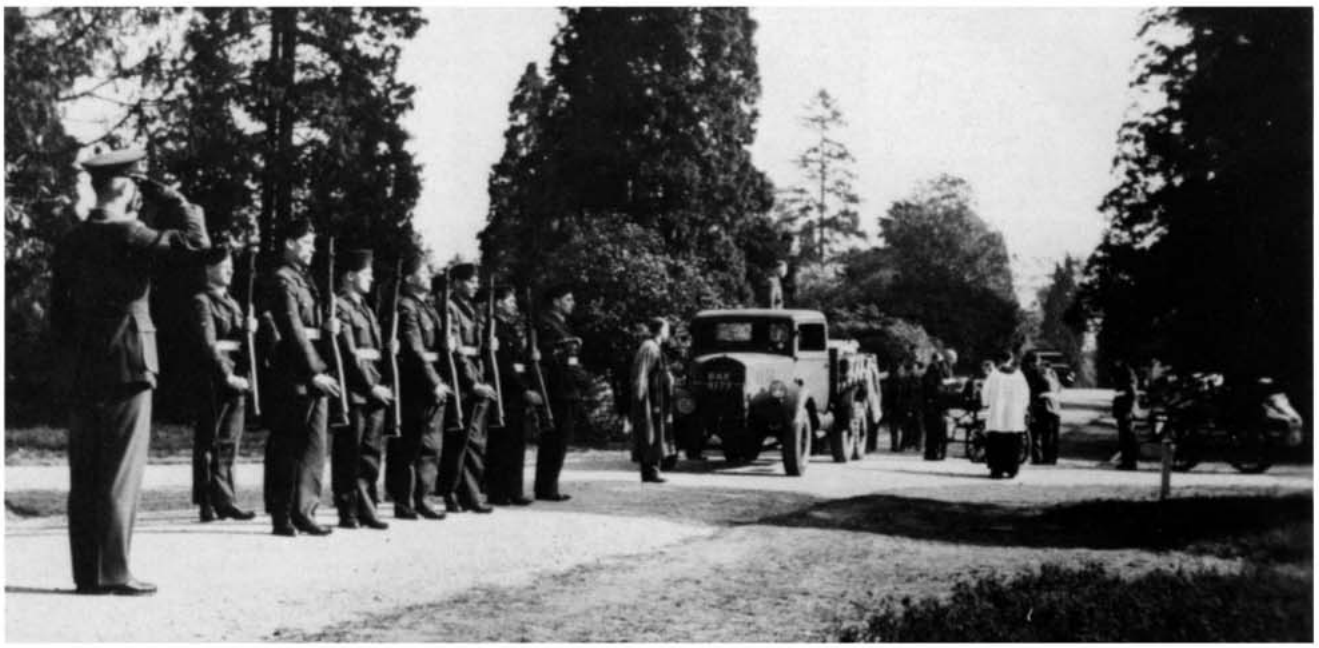
Pilot Officer Jim Emmerson and crew therefore much welcomed a spell of leave at the end of March 1945 and handed over 'their' Lancaster, QB-W for 'Willie', to Watson and his crew. Emmerson was to write that 'Willie was an absolutely superb flying machine. Just perfect so far as pilots were concerned. W-Willie gave us no problems as far as its own performance was concerned.' However, the Gee navigational aid had given trouble fairly consistently, bursting into fire just as 'Willie' was taking-off for one sortie to Essen. Only quick work with a fire extinguisher saved the day, and the set was to play up in the course of a later mission to Dortmund.

Left: **Mrs Ivy Clarke (in Civil Defence uniform) with her daughter, Elizabeth, in the garden of the Prince Albert pub just outside High Wycombe in 1944.** *Right:* **Forty-five years later. Mrs Clarke holds the original letter she wrote to the mother of Joe Watson who crashed within sight of the pub on April 5, 1945.**

The Prince Albert, Park Lane, Lane End. Lancaster RF150 came down in the woods behind the house pictured top right.

On March 31, Watson took 'Willie', as part of a force of 428 bombers, to attack the Blohm & Voss shipyards at Hamburg. The bomber stream was attacked by some 30 Me 262 jet fighters and, as the Canadians were some ten minutes late over the target, they did not enjoy the full protection of the fighter escort and so bore the brunt of the German attacks. 'Willie' was attacked by two of the jets but when the rear-gunner, Flight

A different Park Lane in 1989. The pub was demolished in 1950 when the main road to High Wycombe was widened and straightened. Although partly obscured by trees, the same houses still stand, since joined by another closer to the road.



Brookwood Military Cemetery. Just inside the Pirbright Road entrance lies the area set aside for the burial of Canadian Servicemen who died in the United Kingdom during the Second World War. By the war's end, over 2,400 Canadians from all three services lay amid the indigenous rhododendrons and pine trees which beautify London's largest burial ground. Seven of the graves in Plot 51 were those of Willie's crew, laid to rest in Row F on Friday, April 13, 1945.

Sergeant Howes, engaged one of them, all four of his guns jammed. Flight Sergeant Robinson, the mid-upper gunner, engaged the other which went down trailing blue flames and was officially credited to him.

Possibly Watson and his men would have been the first to admit that an element of luck had been involved in their escape from the German fighters that day but that luck was about to run out.

On April 4, Watson and his crew, together with 'Willie', were part of a force of 13 Lancasters of No. 424 Squadron briefed to attack a synthetic oil plant at Merseburg. Each aircraft carried a bomb load of 1× 4000lb, 4×500lb and 6×250lb bombs, with full petrol tanks for what was calculated to be a seven-hour round trip.

Led by Squadron Leader Ralph Green in QB-P, *Piccadilly Princess*, the Lancasters were airborne and on their way by about 1800 hours. The target was heavily defended by searchlights, flak and fighters but twelve of the 'Tigers' landed safely back at Skipton in the early hours of the following morning. 'Willie' with, it is believed, a fire on board, attempted its emergency landing at Booker. The first try was unsuccessful and Watson took the bomber into a second circuit of the airfield. During this last approach, at about 0220 hours, a wing-tip struck a water tower adjacent to the airfield and 'Willie' spun into the woods with the loss of all aboard.

The Committal. The graves are (from left to right) Pilot Officer Ashdown, Flying Officer Watson, Pilot Officer Robinson, Pilot Officer Thomson, Pilot Officer Armstrong, Flying Officer Rochford and Pilot Officer Howes. (The ranks are those to which they were subsequently promoted.)

Joseph Watson and his comrades were laid to rest in Brookwood Cemetery on April 13, and then Mrs Clarke wrote her letter to Canada.

While the Booker Aircraft Museum was researching the circumstances of this incident, it was with great pleasure that contact was made with Flying Officer Watson's last surviving relative, his brother-in-law Jack Corbett, and it is hoped that, someday, he will be able to see the various artefacts recovered from RF150 now displayed in the museum.

Perhaps, though, the last word should remain with Flight Sergeant Armstrong's mother who, on July 9, 1945, replied to Mrs Clarke:

Please accept our most heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation for your most kind letter which you wrote to Mrs Watson, and which she kindly gave us. Our son was the Bombardier on the same plane which you saw crash on your land. . . .

We were proud for him to go and we know he went out doing what he would want. I wish you could have known him. He never tired of telling us in his letters how kind and generous the folks over there were to him. He was only twenty and in one of his last letters he said 'Now don't worry Mom, remember no matter what happens I'm not afraid'. Dear God, what sorrow and heartbreak this war has caused.

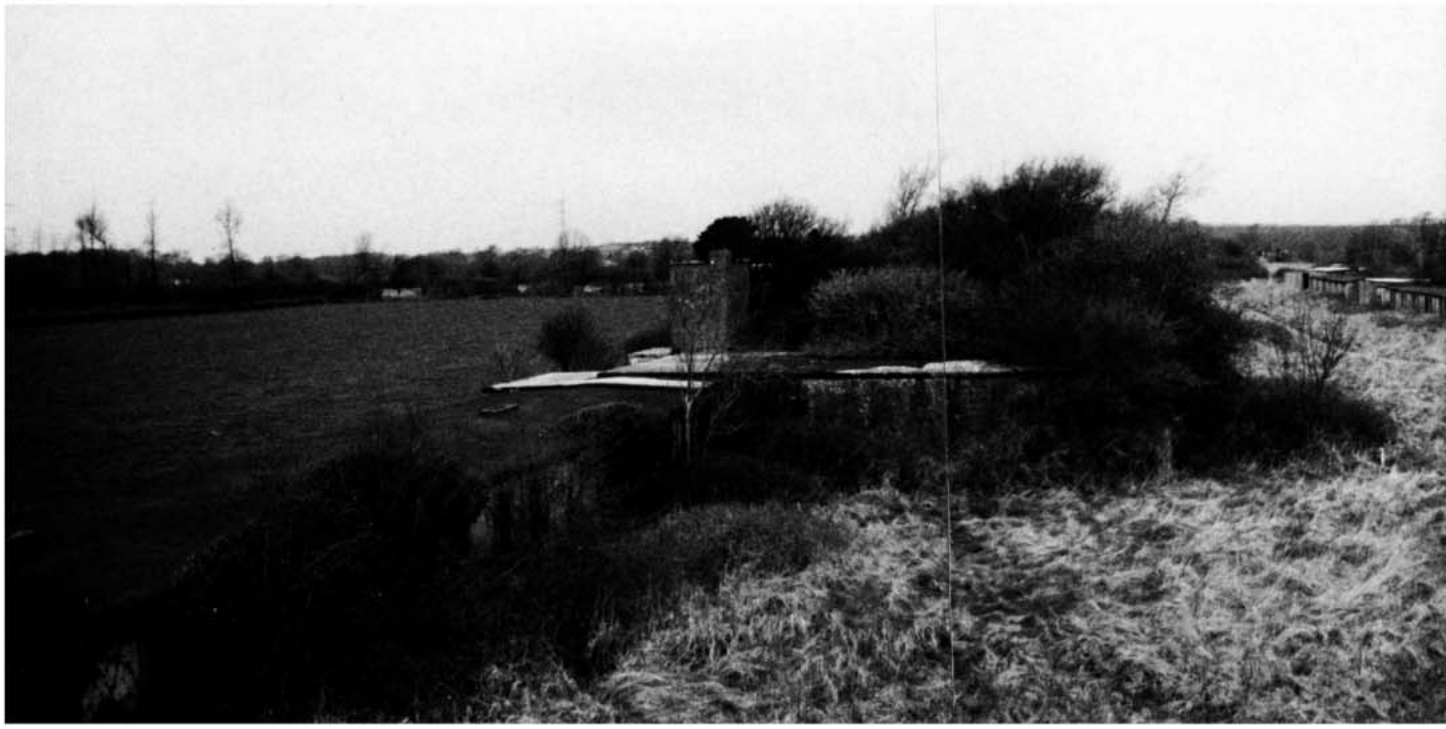
ISLAND FARM CAMP

By Jeff Vincent

On the A48, just outside the town of Bridgend, in South Wales, the traveller may note a group of battered and overgrown huts, the access to which is barred by a hedge and two twisted gate posts with a length of rusty chain strung between them. No indication is present from the road as to the historical significance of the place, which is known as Island Farm. Indeed, apart from some of the local community, few people appreciate that Island Farm Prisoner-of-War Camp saw one of the biggest escape attempts of the Second World War by German prisoners and was the home for two years to most of Hitler's senior officers. It still stands virtually untouched.

The camp was built of prefabricated huts on rich agricultural land in one of the prime sites in the fertile Vale of Glamorgan. The top soil is black humic fill, rich in nourishment for crops, but the subsoil is yellow-orange clay, a detail of some importance as we shall see. The terrain is slowly undulating, gently rising from the north side, the side of the A48 and the camp entrance, towards the sea (which is only three miles away).

The layout of the camp is fairly typical of its time. The accommodation huts were built in prefabricated materials; they represent 'wings' of the central ablution block which was built of red brick. Each of these ablution blocks had a tower with a water tank in the upper storey, and a boiler on the ground floor. Some buildings, of special use, do not conform to this pattern. Amongst these are the Motor Transport (MT) shed, the cookhouse, laundry, HQ block, and two wooden structures at opposite ends of the camp, one used as a coffee shop and the other as a tailor and barber's shop. On the higher side of the camp a larger than average hut was built, with good views towards Bridgend and in the winter, when vegetation is bare, towards the sea.



An undated panorama of Camp 11 believed to have been taken in 1948 by Elwyn Jones, the camp photographer. The picture was taken from the southernmost look-out tower (see plan overleaf) and the town of Bridgend lies in the background. The hut in the extreme right foreground housed the Field-Marshals and that in the extreme left foreground is the Generals' dining room (No. 12 on plan), with the pointed roof of the cookhouse (No. 13) immediately behind. The small hut in the centre was the barber's and tailor's shop (No. 9). The huts to the left of it (Nos. 10 and 11) housed German junior ranks who looked after the Generals. Note the lights which illuminated the wire at night. These had replaced the trip flares and acetylene lamps after the escape in March 1945. (South Wales Constabulary Museum)

The first use of the camp was to house female workers at a nearby munitions factory but, not surprisingly, the women preferred to go home every night. Later the camp was inhabited for a brief period in 1944 by American infantry awaiting deployment in Operation 'Overlord', the invasion of France.

CAMP 198

Additional prisoner-of-war accommodation became acute as a result of the large numbers of German Servicemen captured in the closing stages of the North African, the Italian and French campaigns. As a result, once the Americans had moved on, the camp was hastily transformed into a PoW cage with the designation of Camp 198.

The transformation of the camp entailed the erection of surveillance towers, barbed wire fences, trip flares and a double enclosure within the camp, forming an inner and outer compound. Following its hasty conversion, however, the site was not properly cleared of building materials, and lengths of electric cable, wood, stacks of bricks and nails had been left lying around. Also the camp was not inspected prior to inhabitation,

Forty-one years later the tower has disappeared so, watched by inquisitive cows, the author took the best possible comparison under the circumstances from the roof of the Field-Marshals' hut. The tailor's shop has vanished and everything is overgrown. No trace remains of the fence.

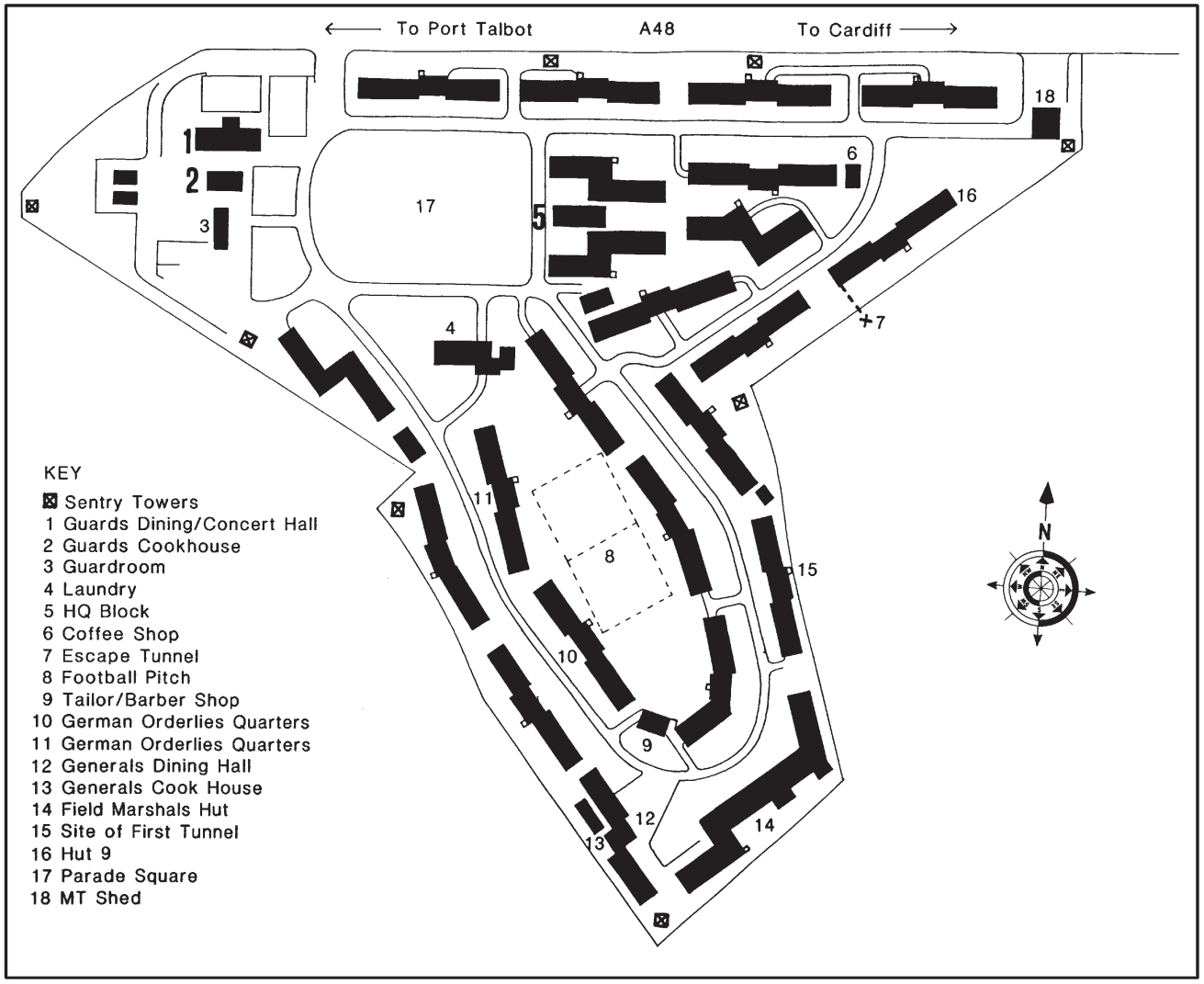
Island Farm PoW Camp lies on the southern side of Bridgend — now in the Welsh county of South Glamorgan but then called simply Glamorgan. Rail communication was convenient via the main London-Swansea line, Bridgend station being just a mile from the camp. Here Field-Marshal von Rundstedt is escorted from the station at the end of the war when Island Farm acquired special status as a VIP cage for captured high-ranking officers. The sheds on the left have since been demolished.

A cheerful group of German junior PoWs, pictured in their room in the hut marked No. 10 on the plan. (South Wales Constabulary Museum)

nor was an inventory made of the contents of each hut. All these security oversights made life very easy for PoWs intent on escaping. The situation was not helped by the guards, recruited amongst medically downgraded personnel. The camp commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel Edwin Darling, MC, had been a PoW during the Great War.

During the winter of 1944-45 several hundred German PoWs were accommodated at the camp. On arrival at Bridgend railway

Herr Guettler, a retired heating engineer now living near Bridgend and former prisoner, stands on the same spot 43 years later. He remembered the faces of his former colleagues but not the names, and led us without hesitation to the spot. The identification was confirmed by comparing the traces of the shelves on the remaining wall.



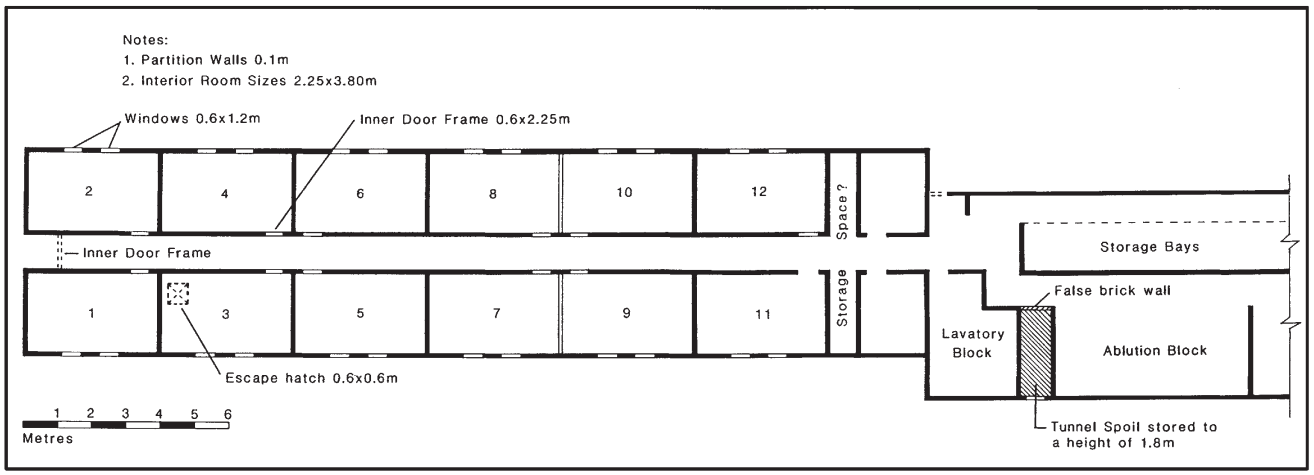
Plan of Island Farm Camp drawn by Colin Hunt based on extensive field walking, interviews with ex-prisoners, and reference to PC Reginald Dodson's model in the museum of the South Wales Constabulary. It is by no means definitive and the purpose of several buildings remains obscure. Fading memories and exuberant vegetation have not helped.

station, they were marched a mile down the road to their new home but it was not long before the young and aggressive prisoners thought of escaping. Elaborate preparations were made for a mass breakout entailing the construction of two tunnels and the arrangement for at least one attempt at cutting the perimeter wire at night.

A first tunnel was dug using a trap door at the base of one of the stoves in an ablution block. The literature and the collected memories of the ex-PoWs are unclear as to its exact position and whether this was supposed to be a real attempt or just a decoy in order to divert the attention of the guards from the main tunnel. At any rate, this first tunnel was discovered during a surprise inspection by two officers on a Saturday afternoon in early January 1945. Although the Commandant immediately pointed out that tunnels usually go in pairs, the guards appear to have assumed a very relaxed attitude to the possibility of the existence of another tunnel.

A second tunnel had been started at the end of 1944, the entrance being situated in the second room on the right of Hut 9 when entering the hut from its southern entrance. It was, naturally enough, a carefully selected location. The hut was about 45 feet from the wire, near the MT shed (empty at night) and fairly close to one of the lookout towers, which, however, also overlooked the A48. This would have meant that the activity on the road would have distracted the guards

The remains of the trap door to the first ill-fated tunnel. The subsidence of the base of the stove platform might have been caused by the stove having been placed on fresh soft concrete soon after the trap door was sealed after discovery. A PoW had scribbled on the walls of the hut 'to the tunnel' with an arrow pointing in the wrong direction, no doubt to taunt the guards after the discovery. The precise location of this tunnel is not known.



A plan of Hut 9, from which the successful escape attempt was made. All measurements were made in March 1989, 44 years almost to the day since the break out — the largest in Britain during the war. (Colin Hunt)

and there was a better chance of the road noise covering any from the tunnelers. The ground around Hut 9 was flat and the field chosen for the exit to the tunnel was farmland.

Access was through a trap door cut through a slab of concrete using a red hot chisel. Each time the door was used and replaced, concrete dust was sprinkled on the floor to hide its outline and, in order to distract a guard's attention during an inspection, a picture of enticingly naked women was painted on the wall above the trap door. The initial shaft was sunk to a depth of 20 feet and from the base of this the escape shaft proper was dug towards the field.

The clay subsoil made the risk of collapses very real and the escapers used pieces of timber and asbestos to shore the sides. At one point, when they ran out of props, they sawed off the legs of all the tables and chairs in the hut, lowering them by a few inches. However, as all furniture was uniformly shorter, and the guards had no record of bunk and table heights, they noticed nothing strange. Bed boards were also used as shoring.

The prisoners solved the problem of ventilation in an ingenious way. They built a fan with the vane made out of a bucket and the air tube made out of empty food tins welded together. It is unclear where the fresh air was sucked in from, unless the trap door was left open during tunneling, a somewhat risky business. (In a tunnel in a similar camp in nearby Newport, the air intake had been disguised as a rustic table in the garden of one of the huts.)

The maximum time anyone could spend below was fifteen minutes and prisoners sometimes worked naked in order to avoid bringing the tell-tale clay back into the hut. For the actual digging a home-made iron spike and shovel made out of a bedstead were used. Spoil disposal is potentially the biggest problem for would-be escapers. At Island Farm the spoil was towed out using an improvised sledge pulled by a line made of electric cable but, at some stage, the sledge must have broken under the weight of the clay. Some soil was dispersed onto flower beds and vegetable patches, some in a newly-dug long jump pit, but the bulk of clay was made into small balls and these were piled into a special 'spoil room'.

The corridor in Hut 9 looking towards the ablutions. The trap door room is the second on the right.

The outline of the sealed trap door. The wall still bears feint traces of the alluring woman painted to distract the guards.

The entrance to the 'spoil room' as it appeared in January 1989 with the mound of clay balls still in place. The opening had been made by PC Dodson back in 1984.

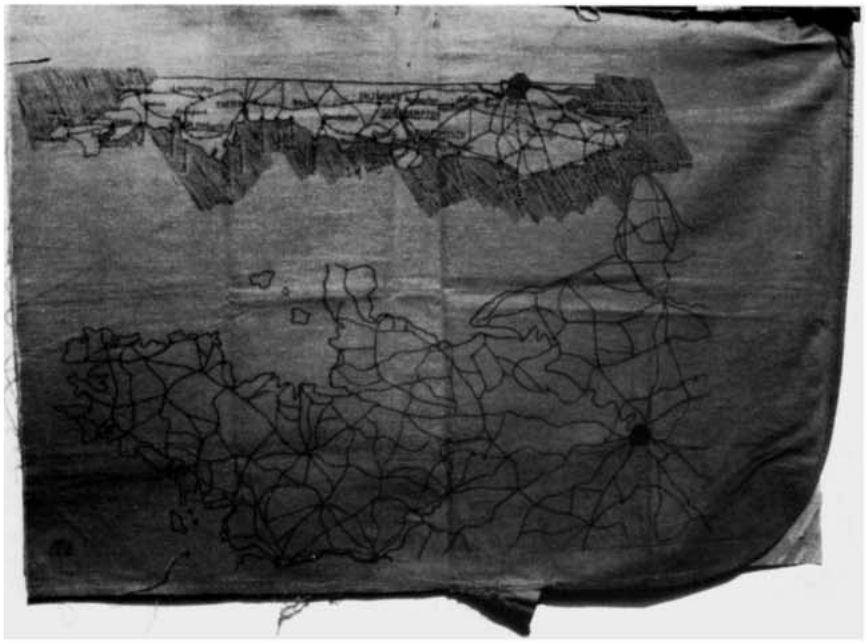
The interior showing how the spoil level was kept below the window frame in order not to give the game away. These pictures were taken in January 1989, two months before unknown hands pulled the wall down, scattering the clay balls.

At the junction between the ablution block and the south-facing wing of Hut 9 there was a small room 6ft by 10ft with a window, which was probably intended for luggage storage. One night the entrance to this was bricked up using bricks scavenged from all over the camp, but a few loose bricks were left at the top. Here the balls of clay were pushed through and, once the bricks were replaced, the false wall effectively hid the room.

The room was also used to dispose of any items linked with the escape which the diggers wanted to get rid of but dare not throw in the camp rubbish bins because of their heavy contamination with subsoil, a give-away sign to the guards that tunnelling was in progress. The spoil was kept below the level of the window sill (6ft above the floor) so as not to obstruct the window and thus give the game away. Altogether the tunnel took three months to construct.

On the night of March 10-11, 1945, the escapers started assembling in Hut 9, and the escape began at about ten o'clock. One by one the prisoners went through the trap door, dressed in civilian clothes and carrying extra rations which had been carefully hoarded for the escape. One pair, Leutnants Karl Ludwig and Heinz Herzler, carried a map of England on the tail of a khaki shirt. The map had been copied from a railway diagram which the prisoners had removed from one of the rail coaches that had taken them to Bridgend. The stone hiding the mouth of the tunnel was pushed to one side and, by 2.15 a.m., some 66 prisoners had managed to get out of the tunnel undetected. However the escape was given away by the next prisoner, a Luftwaffe subaltern called Tonsmann, who was carrying a white kit bag which was spotted by one of the guards. After shouting halt, the guard had proceeded to open fire, hitting Leutnant Tonsmann in the shoulder. The camp was immediately alerted and eleven escapers who had not managed to get further than the field were rounded up within minutes. For the first few hours the camp staff failed to grasp the extent of the breakout, but by morning,

The remains of the sledge, overlooked by the treasure hunters in March 1989. Note the electric cable used as a substitute for rope. It would appear to have been built out of a small oil drum sawn in half. The fact that prisoners were able to steal such items is further evidence of the poor security in the camp.



The map copied from a railway diagram onto a shirt tail by the escapers and now in the possession of Mrs Knight, daughter of Superintendent Bill May who was in charge of the police operation to round up the escapers.

Left: **The exit outside the wire with the boulder which hid the opening rolled aside. The tunnel mouth could still be seen in the 1970s** *right*. **(Western Mail)**

when an incident room had been set up at the local police station under the command of Superintendent Bill May, a proper nationwide alert and search was set in motion.

The escape generated a spate of stories which are now part of the local folklore, the most bizarre perhaps being the one involving the local doctor's car. This was parked outside his home, in the nearby Merthyr Mawr Road, and when four escapers picked the door lock, they found it had a flat battery. The problem was solved by some off duty camp guards returning from the pub, who obligingly gave the prisoners a push start, without realising who they were helping! Subsequently the car was abandoned in the Forest of Dean after it ran out of petrol.

The escapers had varying degrees of luck, although none stood much chance of getting out of the country. The furthest any escaper had travelled was Eastleigh where two were recaptured.

When all had been rounded up an inquest into the escape was held, which correctly identified the problem as the lax security at Camp 198. The trap door in the floor of Hut 9 was discovered and sealed with fresh concrete but, so successful were the PoWs in hiding the existence of the false wall to the secret room, that it remained undiscovered. The decision was taken to transfer all PoWs elsewhere, and on March 31 the camp was emptied of all its inmates. Shortly afterwards the second phase of Island Farm's life as a cage began when it became No. 11 (Special) PoW Camp.

The comparison in 1989. Note how the vegetation has grown up in the space of 15 years or so, almost obscuring Hut 9.

CAMP 11

During the six years of the Second World War, the Allies had captured an increasing number of senior Axis officers. The harvest of high ranking prisoners increased considerably after the various German surrenders and, in May 1945, 127 officers of general or equivalent rank arrived in Britain. Some were taken to Grizedale Hall, near Coniston Water *(see After the Battle No. 2)*, and others to the White House at Wilton Park near Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire. Throughout their stay at both locations, many of the senior officers were transferred to and from the interrogation centre, known as the London District Cage, run by the redoubtable Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Scotland.

In early January 1946, all the senior officers (with the exception of Field-Marshal Ernst Busch who had died in his sleep at Wilton Park) were sent to Island Farm. By this time the camp, although outwardly little changed, had assumed a somewhat more genteel air. It was commanded first by Major Topham, and latterly by Lieutenant-Colonel C. M. L. Clements, a cavalry officer. Both proved kind and considerate towards the vanquished internees, the nominal roll of whom reads like a Who's Who of the German armed forces. Amongst the prisoners were four Field-Marshals — von Runstedt, von Kleist, von Brauchitsch and von Manstein — and scores of senior commanders who had made their names during the war. There was General Frido von Senger und Etterlin, defender of Cassino and envoy for SS-Standartenführer Karl Wolff (who was also at Island Farm) in organising the surrender of all German forces in northern Italy; General Hasso, Baron von Manteuffel, one of the most successful Panzer commanders on the Eastern front; Generals 'Papa' Ramcke, Hans von Ravenstein and Ritter von Thoma of the Afrika Korps; Admirals Voss and Hartmann and the SS Generals Max Simon and Bherens who would be later executed for war crimes. The Camp Leader was Hans-Georg von Seidel, one of the very few non-career soldiers and ex-Quartermaster-General of the Luftwaffe.

Camp 11 was now securely guarded although vigilance was relaxed, both because of the age of some of the prisoners (von Runstedt had just passed his seventieth birthday) and because none of the prisoners had anywhere to escape to as Germany lay in ruins. Some 130 German junior ranks served their seniors as batmen, cooks and mess orderlies.

The generals passed their time reading, painting, or carving toys out of wood and some worked for the Forestry Commission or on the farms nearby in order to augment their meagre PoW pay. General von Senger, former Rhodes scholar, holder of the Knight's Cross and the man who had ordered the German defenders not to go within 300 yards of the walls of the abbey of Montecassino in order to avoid its destruction by the Allies, worked as a gardener for the squire of Merthyr Mawr. Hardship seems to have been relatively common. General von Seidel, for instance, asked one of the interrogators to sell an Argentinian decoration with diamonds on the open market on his behalf in order to raise money for his family in Germany, and the squire of Ewenny found one Lieutenant-General, employed by him as a labourer, gorging himself on dog biscuits!

The psychiatric condition of some prisoners is also interesting. Stripped of power and its trappings (all medals bearing swastikas had been confiscated), these men who had fought the world for six years suddenly found themselves prisoners in an enemy country, subjected to interrogation regarding their political affiliation, and suspected of knowing more than they admitted about the genocide of the Jews or of war crimes carried out by troops under their command. In some cases they had not seen their families for six or seven years, as in the case of Hans von Ravenstein (a Pour le Mérite and Knight's Cross holder) who had been captured at Sidi Rezegh in November 1941 while commanding the 21st Panzer Division. Some, like General Karl Wilhelm von Schlieben, the defender of Cherbourg, suffered badly from 'barbed wire fever' a condition of depression common in PoW camps.

The most remote, however, was Field-Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt. His only son had died of cancer and he was the one officer to be allowed two rooms (a sitting room and a separate bedroom whereas everyone else had a bedsit) in the highest and most comfortable hut in the camp. When he left for Nuremberg to give evidence at the trial of the Nazi leadership, all the generals lined up on parade just inside the exit to the inner compound to see him off with his faithful Chief-of-Staff, General Gunther Blumentritt. When he returned from the trial to Bridgend, von Runstedt had aged considerably. He could not walk without the aid of two sticks because of his arthritic hips and he had to undergo treatment at the local Bridgend Hospital. There he was looked

Left: **General von Seidel (on the left), the camp leader, and the commandant, Colonel Clements in 1948 at Ewenny Priory, the squire's residence near the camp. (Lt-Col. C. M. L. Clements)** *Right:* **Forty-one years later von Seidel's stand-in has even reconstructed the correct uniform! The white stone eagle was moved into its current place in the photograph in 1974.**

Left: **A group of German junior ranks on the football pitch in a picture taken in late 1946. These men were all employed as cooks or mess orderlies for the generals. The last man on the left is Hulmuth Geuttler. Note the diamond-shaped leg patch denoting PoW status.** *Right:* **Herr Guettler, standing in for himself 42 years later.**

Left: **Field-Marshal von Rundstedt in his prime — an undated souvenir photograph taken after the fall of France and his elevation to Field-Marshal, but before the award of the Oak-leaves to his Knight's Cross on July 1, 1944.** *Centre:* **Von Runstedt in a copy of an autographed and dated picture given to Captain Lees. The picture was taken while the Field-Marshal was at Island Farm and the physical change is evident. Most of the contemporary pictures of the generals show physical deterioration although rations appear to have been adequate, but the stress associated with the war and capture exacted a heavy toll.** *Right:* **The Field-Marshal's bedroom where only a curtain rail remains of the original fittings.**

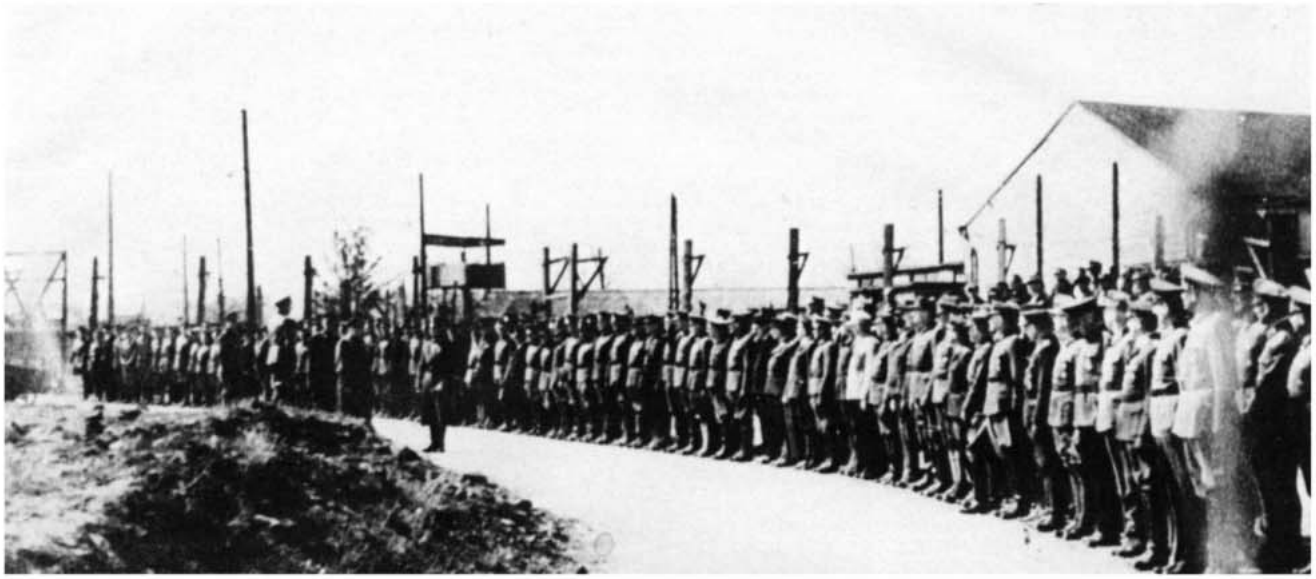
after by a young and caring physiotherapist, Elgiva Thomas (the same girl who had treated the gun shot wound of the unfortunate Leutnant Tonnsman).

All PoWs of senior rank had to be interrogated to ascertain the genuine opponents of Nazism with a view to early repatriation. This process was known as political screening. It was conducted by Dr Otto John aided by four other interviewers. Dr John, a lawyer, had been involved in the 20th July plot to kill Hitler and had escaped the Gestapo by flying to Spain. He was recruited by the Foreign Office as a screener because he knew most of the generals personally and had a very good anti-Nazi background. Dr John was instrumental in obtaining the early repatriation of Hans von Rundstedt, who had been captured with his father at Bad Tolz on May 2, 1945 and who was suffering from laryngeal cancer. (After the war John was to rise to be head of the Federal Internal Security Office, and was kidnapped and held prisoner by the Russians in unexplained circumstances.)

A young British officer of German stock, Captain Ted Lees, assisted with translation whenever visitors dropped in to visit some of the captive generals. One of these was Captain Basil Liddell Hart, the military messiah of the Blitzkrieg, who had befriended most of the senior officers when they were residing at Grizedale Hall, just a short drive from his own home. This was a unique opportunity to record for posterity the history of a turbulent time in our troubled century, based on first-hand accounts by the German protagonists, and during their stay at Grizedale, Liddell Hart had spoken to all those senior officers who would talk to him on the conduct of the war. He condensed the outcome of his interviews in two books, *Over the Hill* and *History of the Second World War*. The War Office, however, revoked Liddell Hart's security clearance because he was thought to be too friendly towards Britain's former enemies (for example he had obtained a mattress to ease the pain of von Runstedt's arthritic back) and he did not see the generals again for two years. On March 21, 1948, the Liddell Harts were finally allowed to take Generals von Seidel, Weckmann, Heinrici, Senger and Dittmar out to lunch at the Blue Bird Cafe in Bridgend and afterwards for coffee to the house of the vicar of Merthyr Mawr.

'God with us' — even in the ablutions block of a prisoner-of-war camp!

The camp concert and guards' mess hall. General von Senger, the defender of Cassino, used to play the piano in a corner by the stage during party nights.



Above: **A copy of Captain Lees' picture of the impressive farewell given to Gerd von Rundstedt by 180 generals in May 1948. The elderly Field-Marshal was on his way to give evidence at the Nuremberg trial. (He died in 1953.) The building on the right was the guards' cookhouse.** *Bottom:* **Our comparison 43 years later. The cookhouse has vanished together with the wire.**

Field-Marshals von Manstein and von Brauchitsch left for a military hospital and trial on April 30, 1948, both of them stooped and aged figures, the former a shadow of the brilliant Eastern Front commander he had once been. Throughout their stay, von Rundstedt had refused to have anything to do with them, considering them as Nazi sympathisers, a fact reported in literature and confirmed to the author by one of the mess orderlies who served them at separate tables. On May 4, 1948, von Rundstedt and Generaloberst Strauss (both about to be charged with war crimes) left for Redgrave Hall, near Diss in Norfolk.

By May 1948 the last party of prisoners who had been cleared by John left for Germany under the escort of the CO, Colonel Clements, who noted their reactions of depression to the sights of war-devastated Germany. Clements himself was demobbed shortly afterwards and Camp 11 was officially closed.

Left: **The German High Command! A trio of farm labourers in September 1947 at Ewenny Priory. From left to right: Generalmajor Freiherr von Ow-Wachendorf, SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS Demelhuber and Generalmajor Brunz. (Courtesy Mr and Mrs Picton-Turbervill)** *Right:* **Time stands still in South Wales.**

THE EMPTY YEARS

With the War Office having no further use for it, Camp 11 remained empty and deserted and slowly became overgrown. In the 1950s two huts were used by the local TA as drill halls. Sometime after the camp was abandoned, all fittings such as water pipes, stoves and furniture were removed, with the intention that the camp should be demolished and the site returned to its former agricultural use. However it was sold by the War Office to a property development company.

In the 'fifties and throughout the 'sixties interest in the Camp was at a low ebb with the majority of people wanting to forget the war, but in 1976, thanks to a BBC programme 'Come out, Wherever You Are', and a book of the same title (written by Herbert Williams, one of the researchers of the programme), the camp was brought to the attention of the public as a site of historical interest. The book and the programme concentrate on the story of the escape, and the BBC traced and brought back to the UK some of the escapers, in some cases arranging the reunion with the locals who had been instrumental in recapturing them.

The fortunes of the former senior inmates varied greatly. Some like General Seidel, served in the armed forces of the Bundeswehr, while von Ravenstein took up the civilian job he had held before the war. General Dornberger, who had been in charge of the V1 and V2 projects, found new masters in the USA.

Right up to the late 1970s, the tunnel mouth was visible, and a party of geologists managed to re-enact the escape backwards up to the base of the entrance shaft. A picture taken at the time shows the ventilation and shoring systems of the tunnel still virtually untouched, but shortly afterwards the tunnel was sealed.

Several applications for residential development having been turned down, the Camp is now used by locals to walk their dogs and as an exercise ground for mock battles fought by weekend warriors who fire paint pellets at each other, a rather appropriate setting for such an activity.

Published evidence on the camp is, however, hard to come by. One book that may represent the definitive work on the subject of German PoWs in this country is *Thresholds of Peace* by Matthew Barry Sullivan, himself a former interrogator and German scholar. The accurate reconstruction of life in Bridgend, which takes up a whole chapter, makes interesting reading. Sullivan kept in touch with some of the ex-internees and with Captain Lees who still kept his personal records of the prisoners on a series of cards in alphabetical order. An example of the content of his index is the entry for von Runstedt's cousin and last commander of Army Group Vistula, General Heinrici: 'Heinrici, Gotthard, General Oberst, captured 28.5.45 at Huerna near Flensburg. Born on 21.12.1886 at Gumbinnen. Next of kin: Gertrud Heinrici, Munster Westfalen Burkhardstrasse 8.' The card for the former Inspector-General of the Waffen SS reads: 'Demelhuber Karl-Maria, General der Waffen SS, captured 16 May 1945 at Schleswig. Born 27 May 1896 at Freising. Height 178 cms, weight 10st 7lbs'. Otto John's book *Twice Through the Lines* also contains extensive references to the camp.

Amongst the locals, several took an interest in the preservation of the site but, as no momentum was achieved, a local policeman and ex-sailor, Reginald Dodson, began assembling material for a permanent exhibition on the camp at the museum of the South Wales Constabulary. PC Dodson constructed an extremely detailed model of the site based on contemporary photographs, eyewitness accounts and hours of walking around the camp over many months. On one occasion in 1984 he met a former PoW living nearby who showed him where the false wall hiding the 'Spoil Room' was located. To Reginald's amazement the wall was still intact and the two set about dismantling it to expose the soil, untouched for 40 years.

In 1987 a party of sixth-formers from a nearby school undertook a project on the history of the camp and produced a display which was so successful that it gained official recognition by being exhibited for a month in the National Museum of Wales. This also attracted national coverage in the media. The material gathered during the project has been published in a book *Island Farm* which can be obtained from Brynteg Comprehensive School, Ewenny Road, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan.

The author visited Island Farm several times during the winter and spring of 1988-89. The sealed trap door is relatively easy to spot as its outline is clearly visible and it bears several pick marks as if somebody has tried to open it up again. Amazingly, the spoil is almost all still in place in what must be one of the most unique remnants of WW2 escapology still intact. Some of the clay balls, of which there are thousands, still bear the imprints of the hands that moulded them. During a subsequent visit the author found

The mouldering remains of Island Farm Camp photographed by Ken Wakefield in November 1989.

the place ransacked and the wall dividing the secret spoil room from the showers demolished and most of the spoil disturbed. Interest in the spoil was probably rekindled by these visits, as the author had unwisely remarked to others on the site that the room might have been containing furniture or other kit when it was filled. The treasure hunters had apparently drawn a blank and abandoned the venture but had been careless for there, lying amongst the disturbed clay balls, the author found the remains of the original sledge which had split under the weight of the spoil and had been disposed of 'securely' by the prisoners.

In von Runstedt's suite the only item still in place is a curtain rail at the window. Elsewhere, slogans on walls, names of former occupants and fanciful images of naked women are rapidly fading. During each visit the author notices further deterioration. Some buildings, such as the camp laundry, have partially collapsed. Others like the guard towers, the cookhouse and the barber's shop have vanished, only their foundations being visible through the thick undergrowth.

In Bridgend and elsewhere, memories of the generals linger on. Major Topham, Captain Lees, Sir Basil Liddell Hart are all now dead but Elgiva Thomas remembers von Rundstedt as an aristocrat and a gentleman who, to thank her for her attention, gave her a signed photograph which she treasures to this day. Helmuth Guettler, a sailor captured in Brest in 1944, served the generals as a mess orderly and played football with them in his spare time. At his wedding to a local girl, an SS general played the piano and he was presented with a wedding card drawn by a Luftwaffe general with artistic talent and inscribed by von Rundstedt. He still lives locally with his bride of 41 years.

If and when the contractors move in to clear Island Farm Camp to prepare the site for housing or other development, a unique piece of Second World War history will vanish forever. It is the author's hope that this article will help record for posterity a brief glimpse of this Valhalla of a vanquished army.

DEVASTATION AT DARWIN

By Dr Stephen Dyer

Darwin in February is hot and sticky and even at night the thermometer hovers around 80°F. Bathurst Island is another 50 miles closer to the equator, and in 1942 at the Catholic mission there was no air conditioning. On February 19, Father John McGrath was sweating in his weatherboard radio hut as he radioed:

> '8SE to VID. I have an urgent message. An unusually large air formation is bearing down on us from the north west. Identify suspect. Visibility not clear. Over.'

At VID, the AWA radio station in Darwin, Lou Curnock acknowledged 8SE's message and, as required, telephoned it through to Royal Australian Air Force Operations. It was 9.37 a.m. At 9.58 a.m. Lou noted explosions in Darwin . . . so they had been enemy aircraft! At least there had been 20 minutes warning — not like Pearl Harbor ten weeks previously (*see After the Battle No. 38*).

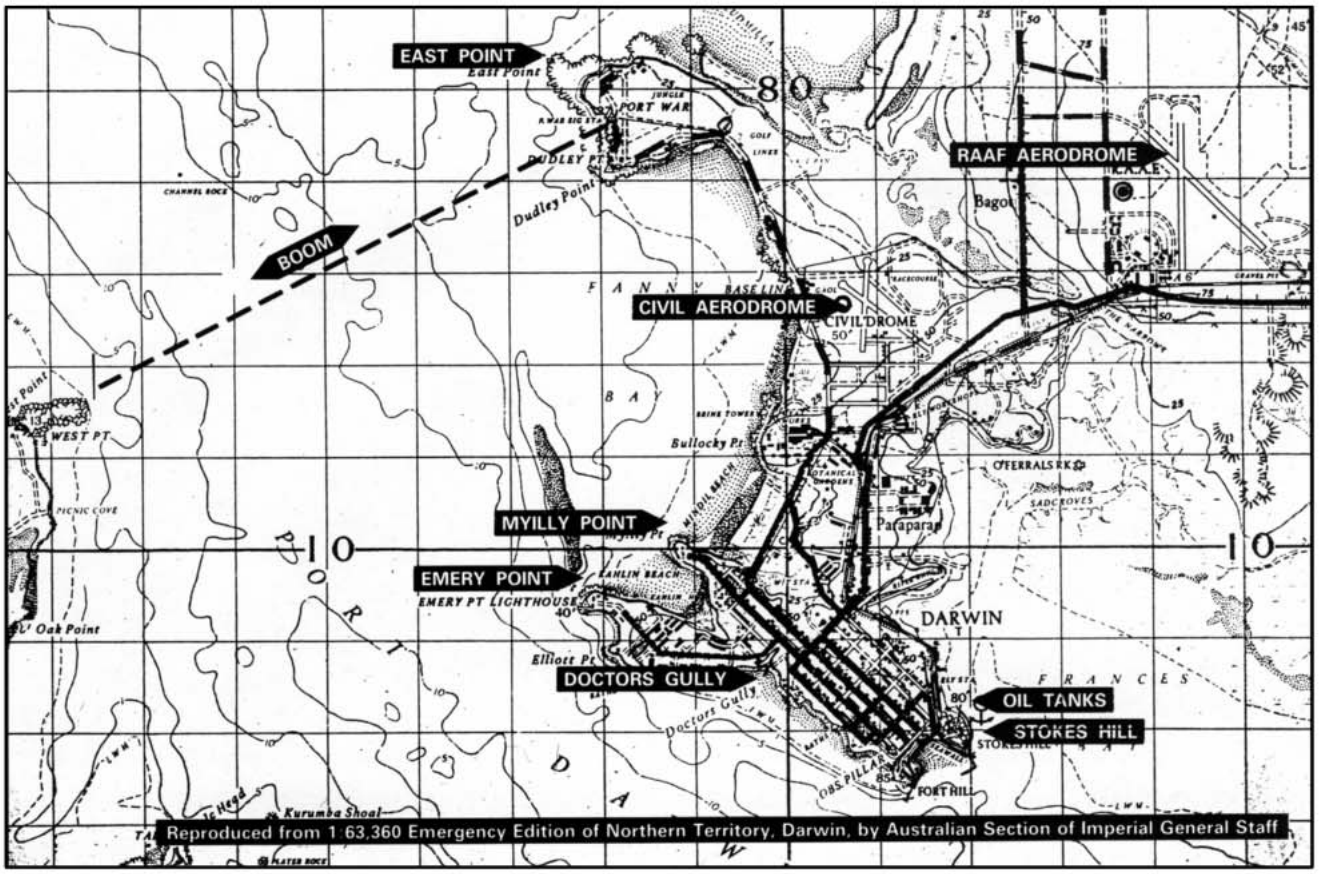
Darwin had been forewarned of Japanese interest in the region. Submarines had been detected and attacked in the vicinity of Port Darwin the previous month. There had been air battles to the north, and lone reconnaissance aircraft had gleamed high in the sky. Darwin was an attractive target. The Japanese appreciation of the strategic situation was clear:

> 'It appears that part of the enemy strength is already taking refuge in the vicinity of Port Darwin . . . At an opportune time the carrier task force will conduct mobile warfare, first in the Arafura Sea . . . endeavouring to annihilate the enemy strength in the Port Darwin area.'

That would neutralise the Allied air and sea forces in the locality and prevent them from interfering in the imminent Japanese invasion of Timor.

Early on the morning of February 19, two Japanese battleships, five cruisers and their attendant destroyers arrayed themselves across the Timor Sea to screen the First and Second Carrier Divisions as they flew off 188 aircraft. The carriers *Akagi, Kaga, Hiryu,* and *Soryu*, had all been used in the attack on Pearl Harbor. So, too, had the attack leader, Commander Mitsuo Fuchida. He was later to say of the Darwin raid: 'If ever a sledgehammer was used to crack an egg, it was then.'

Top: **In 1942, Darwin lay in the Australian 7th Military District whose headquarters building was at Larrakeyah Barracks.** *Above:* **Now this is the home of NORFORCE, an Austalian Army reconnaissance unit.**



Darwin harbour was protected by some four miles of anti-submarine netting. Gun batteries were located at East Point and Emery Point. While, by Australian standards, there were quite strong anti-aircraft defences comprising 18 heavy AA guns, there were no fighter aircraft to provide cover against air attack,

THE EGG

As the Japanese had predicted, the harbour was a refuge for Allied shipping. Among the 47 ships was a convoy that had just been repulsed from their endeavour to reinforce Timor, 500 miles to the north. It consisted of the cruiser, USS *Houston*; the destroyer, USS *Peary*; three US transports, *Meigs, Mauna Loa* and *Portmar*, the Australian coastal trader, *Tulagi* and Royal Australian Navy sloops HMAS *Swan* and *Warrego*. There were another 30 Australian vessels in port, including the corvettes *Deloraine* and *Katoomba* on station for escort and anti-submarine work. The latter was literally high and dry in the floating dry dock. Four RAN vessels tended the four miles of the anti-submarine boom net — the longest in the world.

To protect the port, its jetties and fuel storage, there were 18 anti-aircraft guns: two 3-inch and 16 of 3.7-inch. Compared with other areas of Australia, this was a relatively strong defence. However, there was little likelihood of it being increased, because the industrial areas on the other side of the continent took priority. The Royal Australian Air Force had no aircraft to defend the port apart from 14 two-seater Wirraways engaged in reconnaissance work. At a pinch they might have been considered for local defence, but only five were located in Darwin, and they were unserviceable. The remainder were at Batchelor strip, 50 miles and 15 minutes flying time away. Ten Kittyhawks of 33 Provisional Fighter Squadron, USAAF, which by chance had been available the previous day, had departed that very morning for Koepang.

In and around the town there were between 2,000 and 3,000 US troops, and perhaps 10,000 Australian Service personnel. The civilian population had been depleted to about 2,000 by prudent evacuation of women and children to the south between December 1941 and early February. About 200 women remained, mainly employed in service support work as typists, telephonists, etc.

Bathurst Island lies 50 miles north of Darwin on the Japanese approach route and it was from this small hut, now preserved as a store shed as well as a historic monument, that Father John McGrath radioed the first warning.

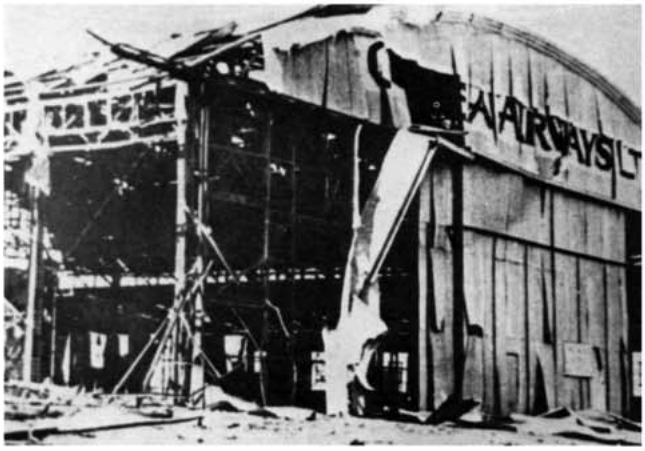
THE SLEDGEHAMMER

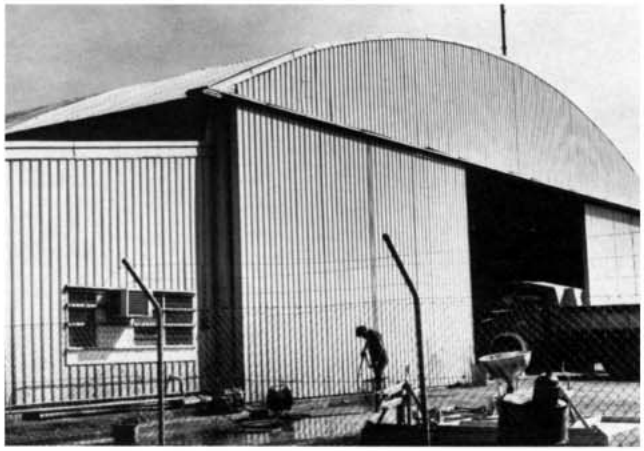
After crossing Bathurst Island and inadvertently alerting Father McGrath, Fuchida had swung his formation to starboard. He had used the same encircling approach when he led the attack on Pearl Harbor. Eighty-one Kates eased through the arc and took up a north-west heading. The formation steadied. At 14,000 feet over the southern shores of the harbour, they aligned their flight path with the main streets of the town. Directly between them and the settlement lay the wharf and the ships. At 9.58 a.m. the first sticks of bombs hurtled down. The formation pivoted lazily and commenced another run. As the Kates headed home, 71 Val dive-bombers and escorting Zero fighters plunged down, to add their contribution to the chaos.

Until that moment it had been a peaceful Thursday morning in the target area and those who looked skywards thought the approaching aircraft were more Americans arriving — until the percussion of the bombs mingled with the air raid siren. Father McGrath's message had not been passed on. The chief officer of the hospital ship *Manunda* described what he saw: 'The wharf was burning near its inner end; *Barossa* and *Neptuna* at the wharf appeared to have been hit and *Neptuna* appeared to be on fire.

Top: **Captain Bert Hussey, a QANTAS pilot, reported: 'We all laid very low as the [fourth] formation passed over to land a salvo about the crossroads at the new hospital, damaging the hospital wing and a private house.'** *Above:* **The distinctive water tower is the only remaining clue to the location of one of the first raid's craters.**

The *Neptuna* burning during the first raid. Darwin township is located over the brow of the escarpment.





Guinea Airways hangar. Built in 1934 for QANTAS, it has survived cyclones in 1937 and 1974, as well as extensive damage during the first raid. Currently used by the Department of Aviation as a workshop and store. The adjacent runway, where the first aeroplane to fly from Britain to Australia touched down in 1919, is now a major thoroughfare, named Ross Smith Avenue after the captain of the aircraft.

Zealandia . . . was on fire. *British Motorist* was sinking by the head. *Meigs* was on fire and sinking aft. *Mauna Loa* was down by the stern with her back broken . . . *Port Mar* was in trouble . . . [*Preston*], ablaze aft went dashing across our bows, missing us by inches and steering with her engines . . . [*Peary*] was on our port side, a solid mass of flames with burning oil around her and what was left of her crew jumping into the burning oil.'

The depth-charges which were *Neptuna's* cargo ignited, then exploded, sinking the ship, and blasting the adjacent (and only) wharf. Five bombs struck the *Peary*. One hit the magazine: 'The ship disintegrated in a burst of flame which appeared to grow out and reach a height of more than one hundred feet. She finally pointed her nose to the sky and disappeared in a pall of black oily smoke, the gun on her fo'c'sle firing to the bitter end.' In all, eight ships were sunk, and three were beached. Another ten, including the *Manunda*, were damaged.

Due north of the town lay the civil aerodrome, and, to the north-east of that, the RAAF airstrips. All came under attack from the dive-bombers and strafing from the Zeros. Wing Commander Tindal was killed while firing a Vickers gun from the edge of his slit trench — the first RAAF casualty on the Australian mainland.

By chance, bad weather had forced the ten American Kittyhawks, which had left for Koepang, to return at 9.40 a.m. Their leader, Major Floyd Pell, took half his formation down, leaving the other five to patrol. As the top cover struggled for height, their leader, Lieutenant Robert Oestreicher, shouted a warning 'Zeros! Zeros!' but within minutes, four of the Kittyhawks had been shot down, with two of the pilots killed. Oestreicher, the most experienced of the group, shot down one Zero before seeking concealment in the clouds: 'After flying through the clouds for half an hour I spotted two Series 97 dive-bombers . . . Intercepting them at 1500 feet, I fired and saw one definitely burst into flames and go down. The other was smoking slightly.' Meanwhile Major Pell and his four companions scrambled back into the air but all were shot down, Pell and one other being killed. Darwin now had no fighter defences.

Over in the town's telegraph office, Archibald Halls was testing the line to Adelaide, 1,600 miles to the south. At 9.58 a.m. he interrupted his work with a brief message: 'There's another air raid alarm. I'll see you shortly.'

He and most of the other men and women of the Post Office staff rushed to their home-made air raid shelter, one of the few in Darwin. Although Japanese records indicate that it was not planned to attack the town itself, Australians were indifferent to this detail — they were under the bombs! Probably only fifteen were dropped, but their effect was out of all proportion to their number. The police barracks, the post and telegraph office, and the Administrator's residence were all hit. So, too, was the air raid shelter and all of the occupants, Halls and three other men, and six women, were killed. The civil administration in Darwin was virtually wiped out at a stroke.

By 10.40 a.m. the Japanese had departed and the All Clear had sounded. The attacking force had lost around 15 aircraft to the American pilots and the anti-aircraft defences. Darwin's wharf was wrecked, and would not be replaced until the following year. The civil infrastructure was in ruins, communications were shattered, confusion and fear reigned. Darwin lay wide open.

The USS *Peary* explodes, hit by five bombs. Photo taken by Signalman Douglas Fraser from HMAS *Deloraine*.

All that remains from the destroyer is now on display at a tourist attraction in Doctors Gully near the old Darwin Hospital.

Myilly Point — the onslaught of urban renewal. Constructed in 1939 in a precinct set aside for senior public servants, in 1987 this house looked little changed from when it was photographed after one of the raids on Darwin (probably the fourth on March 16, 1942).

ANOTHER SLEDGEHAMMER

Just an hour later, fifty-four unescorted Betty bombers of the Japanese Navy's First Air Attack Force from Kendari in the Celebes arrived overhead at 18,000 feet. Unopposed, they unloaded 200 high explosive, incendiary and anti-personnel bombs on the RAAF base: 'With one big crash they dropped their entire loads on the aerodrome and buildings . . . It was a fearful sight. With a noise like the roll of heavy thunder, a thick cloud of smoke, dust and red and yellow flame shot into the air and left a long line of smoke to join up with the flame clouds already hanging over Darwin.'

By the time that the Japanese departed 25 minutes later, the RAAF had lost 6 out of its northern strength of 17 Hudsons and the Americans, 3 Catalinas, a Liberator, 3 Beechcraft, as well as the 10 Kittyhawks destroyed in the earlier raid. The only aircraft that now existed at Darwin were 3 Hudsons, the 5 unserviceable Wirraways, a Fairey Battle, and 3 Moth Minors. Further south there were 9 Wirraways at Batchelor, and 8 Hudsons at Daly Waters but without crews.

The raiders had left behind 250 killed. The immediate legacy of the destruction was to assume that the bombing and strafing were the prelude to invasion. In ten weeks the Japanese armies had advanced 2,000 miles down the Malay peninsula and across the island chain. Between them and Darwin stood only open sea. That very evening the Japanese radio propagandist, Ken Goto, announced from Tokyo: 'Japan is rapidly placing herself in a most favourable position to make . . . a large scale advance on the Australian continent.'

There was, we now know, no plan to invade but at the time it was a very real threat and the response of the civilian population was scarcely surprising. Many abandoned their homes and businesses and headed south, away from the expected Japanese onslaught. Among the refugees there were also Service personnel. Some were responding in good faith to garbled orders to disperse; in others fear had transcended discipline.

THE AFTERMATH

After the official announcement of the raids, rumours of disaster and panic at Darwin began to circulate throughout Australia. A Royal Commission was set up to conduct a post-mortem and recommend any changes necessary to meet further attacks. Within a month the Commissioner had visited Darwin and gathered evidence and from those eyewitness reports, self justifications, attempts to attribute blame, or to settle old scores, came a uniquely detailed record of the events of the day.

THE REASONS WHY

Darwin had been caught unprepared largely because of its antiquated warning system comprising coastwatchers and volunteers. Although there was a radar station at Darwin, it was not yet operational so the only warning came from the mission (and possibly a coastwatcher although the official investigation made no mention of this). The messages had to traverse a complex chain of command. The events of the morning showed how the communication system had failed. It had taken 30 minutes for the warning to be registered. Even then, it was accorded no urgency for it had not been confirmed. Tragically, it had been easy to believe that the report referred to the returning Kittyhawks. There was delay, there was doubt, and there was an inadequate command structure. The latter, more than anything, reflected the fundamental problem that bedevilled Darwin. Although it proudly considered itself Australia's front door, it was regarded as a backwater. The Service personnel were posted there while the 'real' war was being fought in the northern hemisphere. The CO of RAAF Darwin had welcomed new pilots with a sardonic query: 'What have you young buggers done to be sent up here; anyone posted to Darwin must have put up a black somewhere; except me of course!' The absence of any permanent fighter defence reflected the low priority given to the north of the continent. It was regarded as a rear echelon, to which the best were not posted, except as a pennance. Morale and enthusiasm were low.

The lack of response to the second raid was more readily explained. There were simply no aircraft left to defend the port. And some Servicemen had already taken personal decisions to join the impromptu evacuation.

THE LATER RAIDS

The next raid on Darwin did not occur until nearly two weeks later, when eight Zeros attacked the RAAF base and destroyed a Hudson bomber. The RAAF aerodrome continued to be the prime target until mid-June when the Japanese raids switched to the township. In the course of half a dozen attacks, spread over six weeks, bombers and fighters damaged the water supply, set fuel stores alight and destroyed houses and commercial buildings.

However, the defences were improving. A chain of radar stations was operational by June and rudimentary airstrips had been set up along the road to the south. By August the Japanese had begun to attack them but there were no concerted raids. The first Spitfires arrived and were in action by early 1943.

The Bank of New South Wales — built in 1938 and gutted in the 19th raid on Darwin on June 16, 1942.

Darwin's invasion defences. The 6-inch guns at Emery Point, overlooking the entrance to the harbour, were installed in 1936.

The last raid occurred in the early morning of November 12, 1943. Altogether there had been 80 Japanese raids on Australia's northern towns, including Broome *(see After the Battle No. 28)*. Darwin had been the target for nearly 50 of them, that had killed over 250 and injured another 400 or more. In the course of over 700 sorties, the Japanese lost 91 aircraft destroyed, 35 probably destroyed, and another 35 damaged. They in turn had definitely destroyed 61 Allied aircraft and damaged a further 14, as well as wrecking civilian and military establishments.

Every bomb that landed, every alien aircraft that twinkled in the sunlight during those raids demonstrated again and again and again that Australia was no longer comfortably isolated by distance from the events of the world. It is that realisation that has kept alive the memory of the Darwin raids, and especially those of February 19, 1942.

FORTY-EIGHT YEARS ON

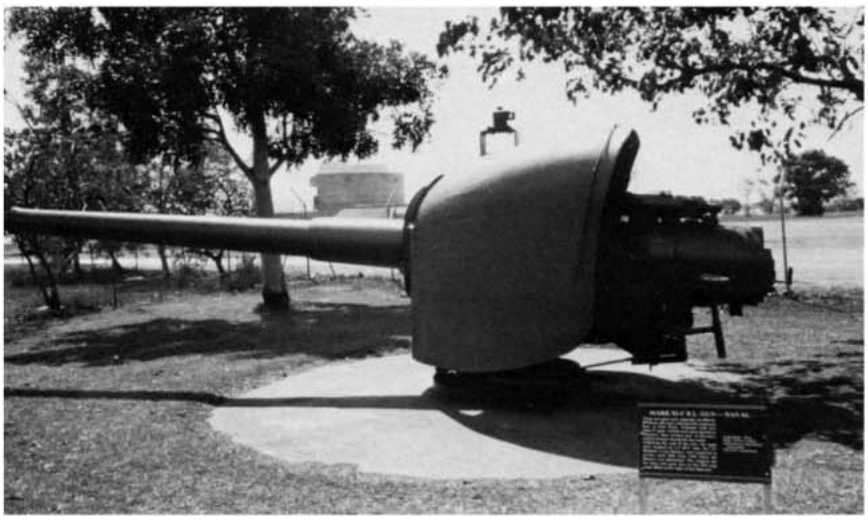
Tourists coming into Darwin by air see sprawling sunny suburbs. The only reminders of war are modern RAAF and USAF jets on the tarmac. Approaching Darwin up 'the Track' as the main highway is still called, the most obvious relics of the war are the fighter airstrips parallel to the road. Each is tidily identified by a large sign giving its name, its origin, and a summary of the units which used it. One, now reactivated as an FA 18 Hornet base for the RAAF, is Tindal, named after the RAAF's first mainland casualty.

Within the town, the observant visitor might detect Bombing Road but otherwise there is little evidence that there was ever warlike activity there. Only lucky or substantial buildings survived the raids. Most, however, were timber-framed with easily shattered asbestos sheeting. Even minor blast or fragments rendered them uninhabitable, and they were later razed. During the course of the war the town was reduced to an erratic scatter of isolated buildings, vacant blocks and craters. For years it remained that way and in 1948 the harbour still reeked of the blitz, buildings were still vacant, and the detritus of war lay rusting in the sea and in the streets.

Darwin rebuilt itself slowly, but much of what remained of the wartime years was obliterated in a couple of hours by Cyclone Tracey on Christmas Eve 1974. The clean-up and revitalisation of the town removed much more.

At the East Point Museum there are numerous relics, and along the shoreline lie the concrete remains of the defences. There are sealed machine gun nests in the cliffs and pillboxes askew on the beach. Gun batteries overlook the harbour and the rusting vestiges of the longest boom net in the world.

Much of the original RAAF accommodation survives, and in a suburb to the north,



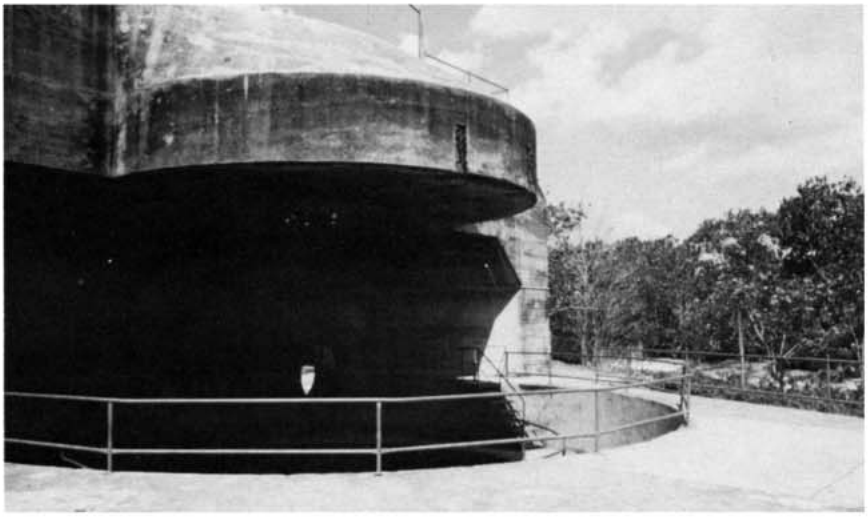
Similar guns from East Point remain in the Royal Australian Artillery Association Museum there.

the Post Office dead are commemorated by street names. Their fate is also commemorated by a brass plate in the lawns of the Legislature:

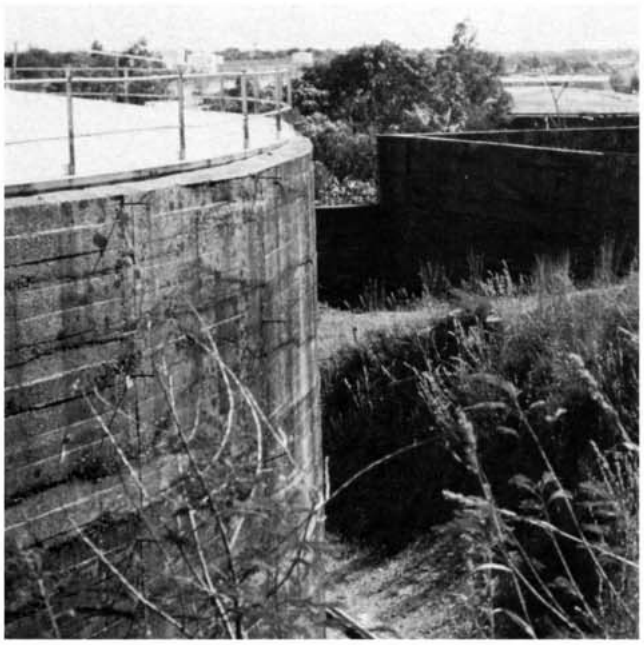
On 19 February 1942
an enemy bomb fell here
and
killed 10 people

Tucked away in other odd corners are similar stark brass plates. On the wharf:

In remembrance of
Waterside workers, seafarers,
and others, who died as a result of
the Japanese bombing raid
on Darwin Harbour on
19 February 1942
Everlasting Peace



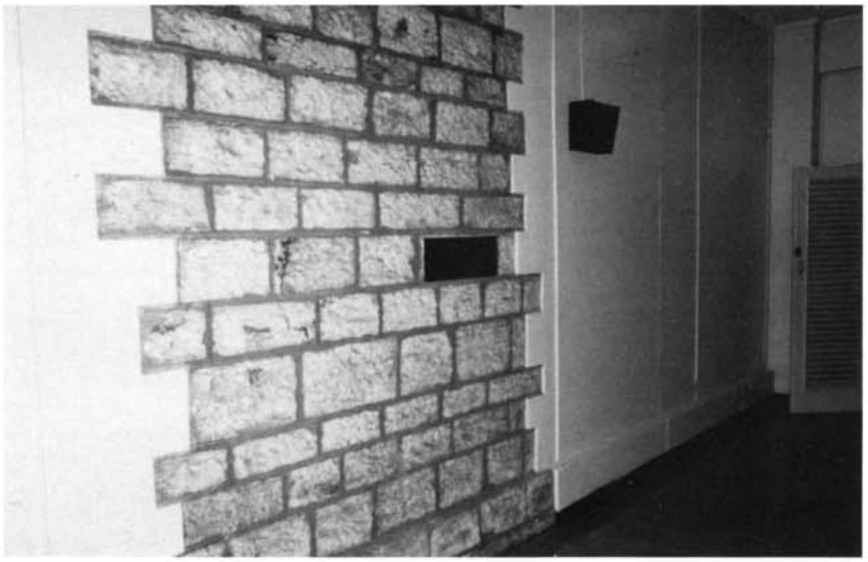
East Point gun emplacements. Recommended in 1925, approved in 1941, the first of the two 9.2-inch guns did not fire its first (and last) rounds until tested in 1944. In 1959 the guns were dismantled. All that remains of Darwin's heaviest defences are the emplacements and one of the securing nuts. The rest were taken away as scrap metal — by the Japanese!



The raid on March 15, 1943 burnt out 2,100 tons of fuel oil in the tank farm on Stokes Hill overlooking the harbour. Even today some tanks are still buckled from the blaze.

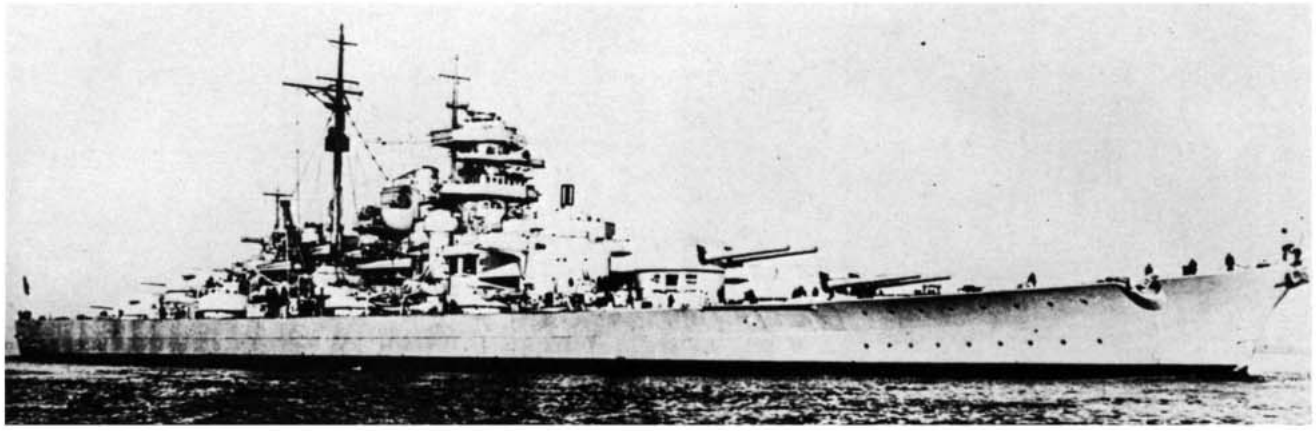
At the oil tanks:
This crash barrier was built from a section of roof girder removed from No. 1 F.F.O. tank showing damage by enemy action
15 March 1943
LEST WE FORGET

If you probe around there are other remnants: a coffee table made from a searchlight; a map of the wartime damage; the fragments of a Zero shot down during the first raid. (Its pilot died in the Cowra breakout *see After the Battle No. 57*). However, the most enduring monument is not physical at all. It is the folk memory of the day ordinary Australians tasted war for the first time — an experience which has coloured the fears of subsequent generations.



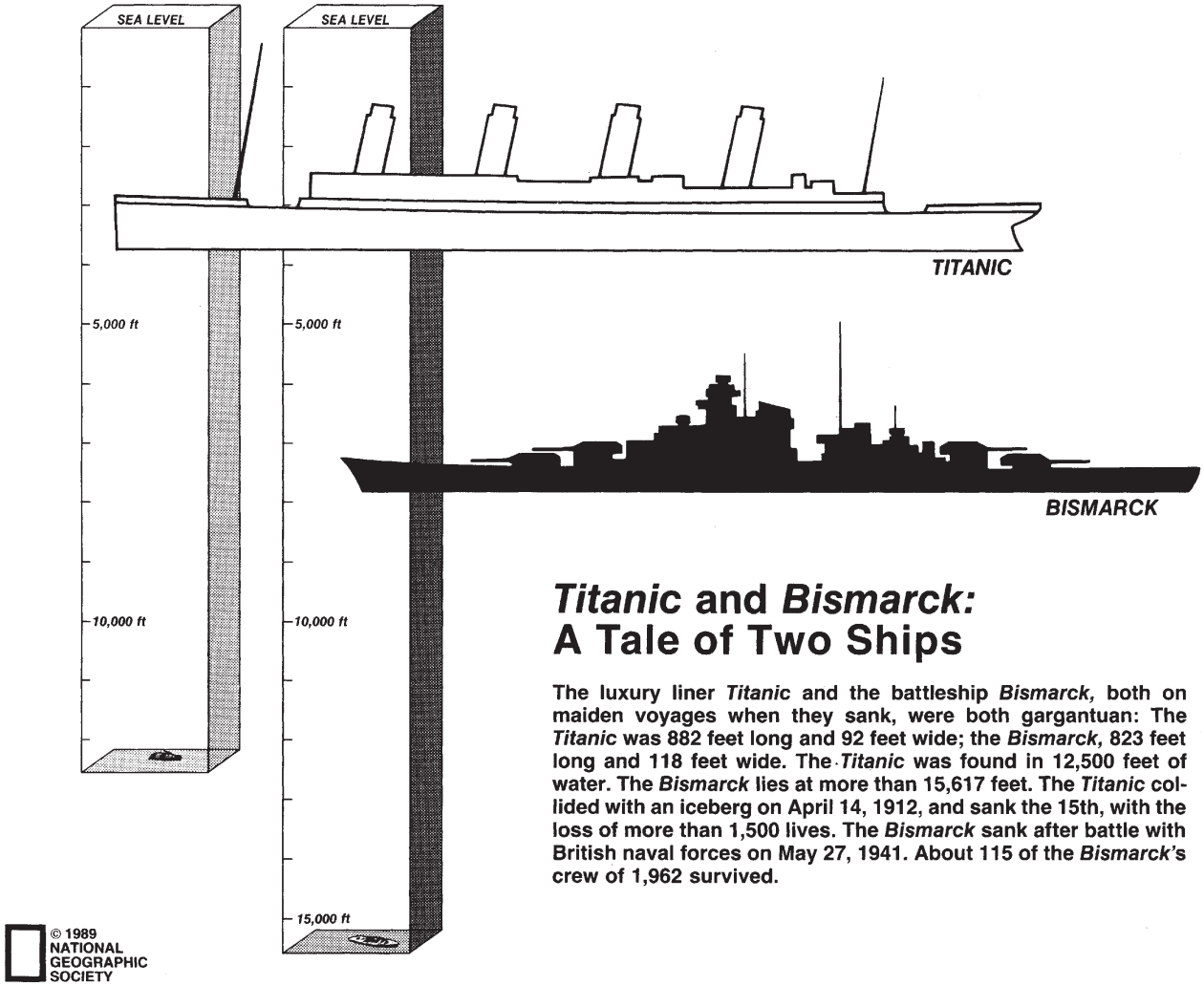
The post office. Reduced to a shell in the raids, and devastated again in the 1974 cyclone, only a fragment of wall remains, now incorporated into the fabric of the Territory's Legislative Assembly building.

Casuarina Beach: A 1941-42 observation and machine gun post, now being undermined by the ebb and flow of the tide.



FIND THE BISMARCK!

In June 1989, Dr Robert Ballard, the American oceanographer, announced that he had found and photographed the wreck of the *Bismarck* sunk in the North Atlantic in May 1941. After a running battle with the Royal Navy's Home Fleet she had gone down in 15,000 feet of water with the loss of over 2,000 of her crew and, until Dr Ballard came on the scene, was assumed to be lost for all time. However, having already astounded the world with his discovery of the RMS *Titanic* at a depth of 12,000 feet in 1985, nothing was now beyond his reach. With his search techniques and equipment proven, an expedition to carry out research in the Mediterranean in 1988 gave him the opportunity to persuade his sponsors to include time for a search for the German battleship — once the pride of the Kriegsmarine and the most powerful warship afloat in the western hemisphere.



Titanic and *Bismarck:* A Tale of Two Ships

The luxury liner *Titanic* and the battleship *Bismarck,* both on maiden voyages when they sank, were both gargantuan: The *Titanic* was 882 feet long and 92 feet wide; the *Bismarck,* 823 feet long and 118 feet wide. The *Titanic* was found in 12,500 feet of water. The *Bismarck* lies at more than 15,617 feet. The *Titanic* collided with an iceberg on April 14, 1912, and sank the 15th, with the loss of more than 1,500 lives. The *Bismarck* sank after battle with British naval forces on May 27, 1941. About 115 of the *Bismarck*'s crew of 1,962 survived.

February 14, 1939. The *Bismarck* was christened by Frau Dorothea von Löwenfeld, granddaughter of Prince Otto von Bismarck.

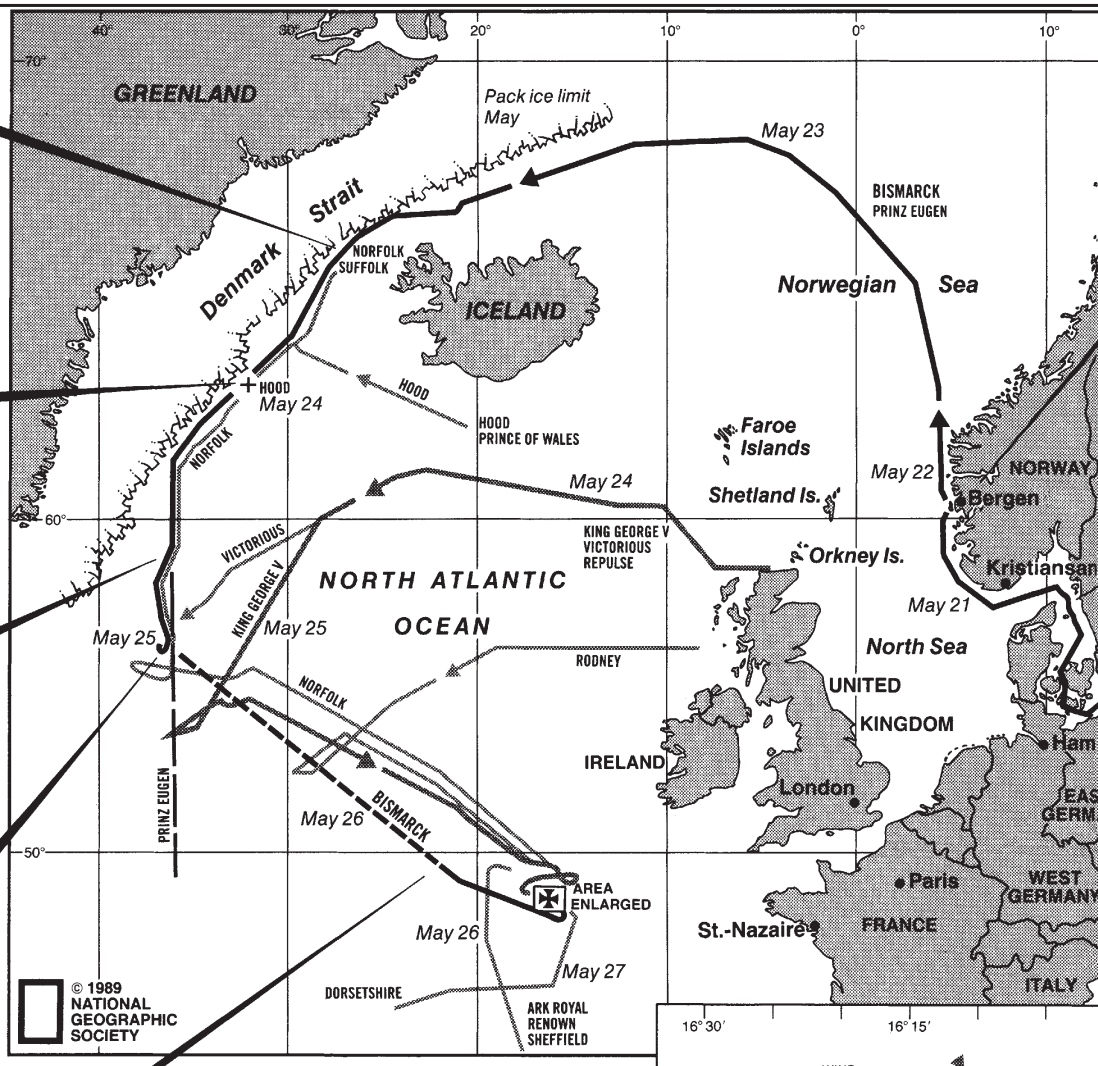
4 The cruisers *Suffolk* and *Norfolk* sight the Germans threading through a minefield May 23. The *Bismarck* opens fire on the *Norfolk* but the British retire safely. They follow the Germans despite rain and snow storms and dangerous ice floes. The *Hood* and *Prince of Wales* are about 250 miles away and closing in.

5 The *Hood* and *Prince of Wales* sight the *Bismarck* at 5:35 a.m. May 24. They open fire. The *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* return fire. At 6:01 a.m. a massive explosion erupts aboard the *Hood.* It sinks rapidly, leaving only three of 1,419 crewmen alive. The *Bismarck* suffers a ruptured fuel tank.

6 As the *Bismarck* engages the British again on the evening of May 24, the *Prinz Eugen* escapes to the south. The *Bismarck's* commander has decided to make for a French port for repairs. A British force including the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal* heads to the area from Gibraltar.

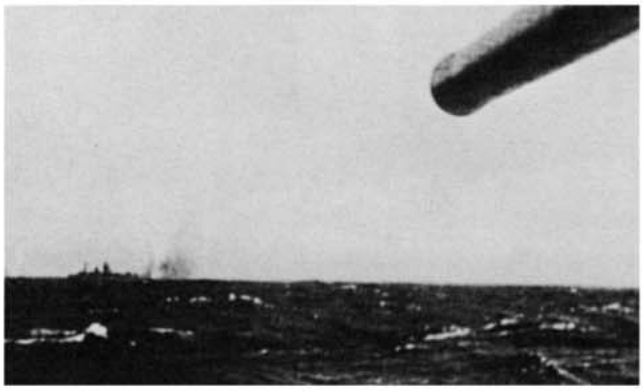
7 Around midnight May 24, amid raging seas, nine Swordfish biplanes from the carrier *Victorious* attack, causing little damage. About 3 a.m. the *Bismarck* evades its chasers and heads southeast for the safety of U-Boat patrols and Luftwaffe air cover.

8 A reconaissance plane from Ireland spots the *Bismarck* May 26. In a last-ditch effort to stop the ship before it reaches safety, Swordfish from the *Ark Royal* score two torpedo hits that wreck her steering gear and jam her rudders, effectively sealing her fate.



9 The main British force sights and opens fire on the *Bismarck* beginning at 8:47 a.m. May 27. The battleships *King George V* and *Rodney* turn south to give the north-sailing Germans broadsides. Two other vessels, the *Norfolk* and the *Dorsetshire,* join the attack. Turning north, the *King George V* and the *Rodney* quickly overtake the limping *Bismarck.* The *Rodney* zigzags in front, pouring on fire. After a few good early shots, the *Bismarck's* fire quickly becomes erratic. By 10 a.m. the ship is a battered hulk. By 10:39 a.m. she has capsized and sunk.

1941. The *Bismarck* photographed from the *Prinz Eugen*.



HMS *Rodney* helps to send the *Bismarck* to the bottom.

3 On May 21, Spitfires over the Bergen-Korsfjord region of Norway sight the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen*. British Admiral Tovey sends the battle cruiser *Hood* to join other British ships on patrol in Denmark Strait. On May 22, a reconnaissance flight determines that the two German vessels have sailed. More British forces head for the search zone.

2 A Swedish cruiser spots the *Bismarck* and its escort, the *Prinz Eugen*, in the northern Kattegat off the coast of Sweden on May 20. A later sighting places them off the coast of Kristiansand, Norway.

1 Under construction at Hamburg since 1936, the *Bismarck* is launched on Valentine's Day, 1939, by Adolf Hitler. After more than two years in fitting and shakedown cruises, she sets sail May 19, 1941, from Gydnia, Poland, with orders to sink Allied shipping in the Atlantic.

Last days of the *Bismarck*

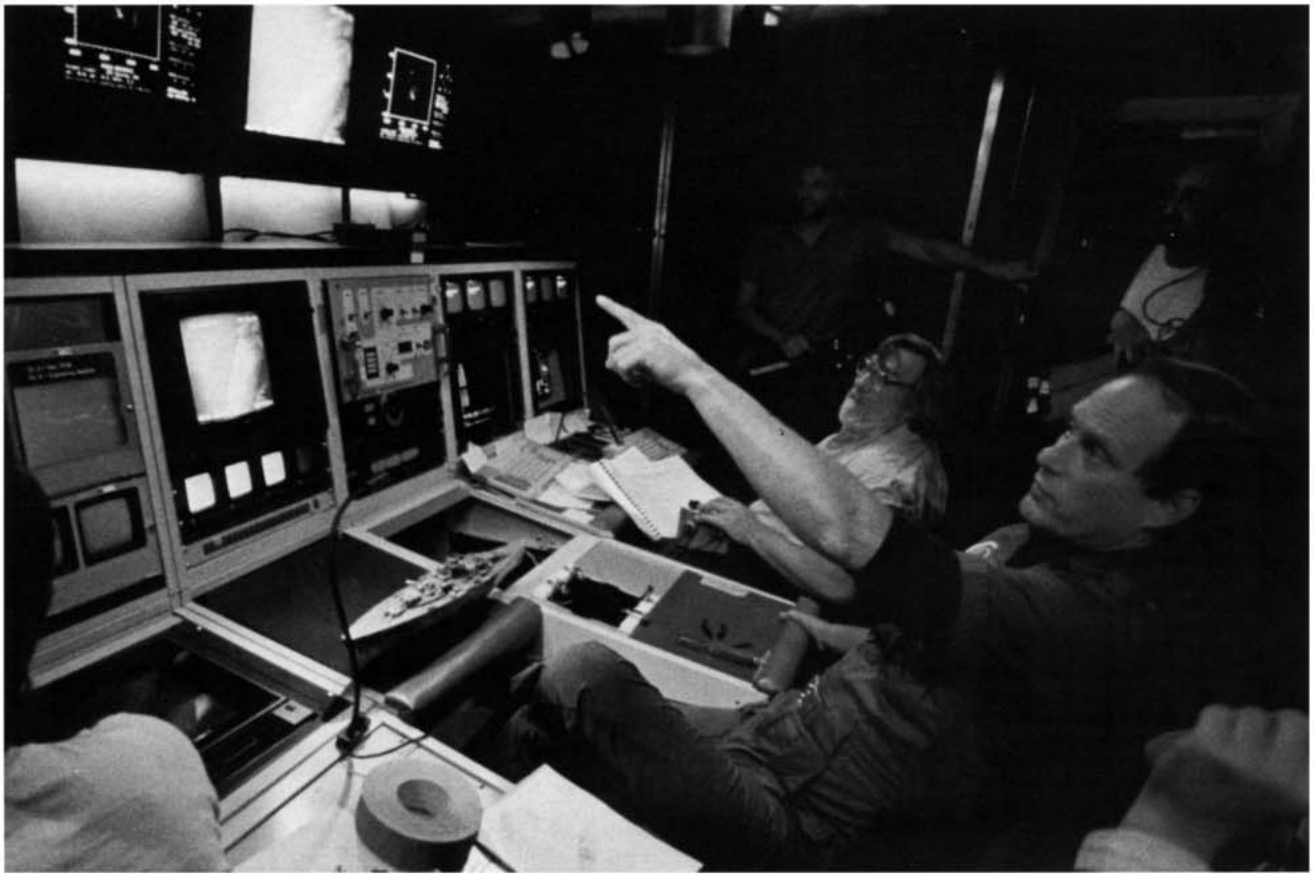
H.M.S. "RODNEY", Tuesday 27th day of MAY, 1941.
From CLYDE, To HALIFAX or At SEA. A/C BISMARCK Ops

Time	Log (Stating type)	Distance Run through the Water: Miles	Distance Run through the Water: Tenths	True Course	Mean Revolutions per minute	Wind: Direction (true)	Wind: Force (0-12)	Weather and Visibility	Sea and Swell	Corrected Barometric Pressure in Millibars	Temperature (°F): Dry Bulb	Temperature (°F): Wet Bulb	Temperature (°F): Sea	LEAVE GRANTED TO SHIP'S COMPANY / REMARKS
		9	5	030										0300. A/C 030°. 0080 to 020, 18.2 kts
0100	17049	2	2	030	140									0044 186 nm. DR 17 183 nm. 0230 15 kts. 0019 A/C
		6	7	250										0043 A/C 030°. 0044 18.2 kts. 0107 A/C 250. 0122 A/C
		11	1	270										
0200	17115	7	0	270	134									0218 A/C 220°.
		12	0	220										
0300	17504	12	0	220	134.6									
														0412 A/C 190°.
0400	17520	3	8	220	134.6	WNW	6	c	24	1007.5	51	47.5		
		15	2	180										0500 A/C 260°
0500	17716	13	0	260	134									
0600	17926	13	0	260	134									
0700	17913	6	3	260	1183									0720 A/C 120°. 0721 A/C 150°. 0724 A/C together
		13	7	Vars										0726 A/C together 090°. 0730 A/C together 140°.
0800	17924	20	0	Vars	132.6	NW	6	c	24	1006.8	52	47	54	0800. A/C together 100°. 0802 A/C together 080°. 0807 Hands
														fall to. 0822, 12 miles. 0847. A/C 175°
0900	18058	19	0	Vars	123.6									0900 A/C together 110°. 0941 Enemy bng 12
														German BS Bismarck. 0947. Rodney
1000	18647	20	0	Vars	124.8									opens fire. Cos 2 pocket ar. requisite for
														1025 Cruiser fire. Co. of AR.
1100	18925	19	0	020	1136									engagement. 1039 Bismarck ceases fire. 1040 1107, 1 Knot. 1115 A/C 025°.
1200	19010	12	7	[illegible]	123	NW	6	b2	24	1000.3	51	50		1140 A/C 150°.

The end as recorded by the logs of the *Rodney* *above* and *King George V* *below*. Although the positions of the various ships can thereby be established, a ship sinking through 15,000 feet could deviate a considerable distance before it struck the bottom. Dr Ballard proved this during his search for the *Titanic* in 1985.

H.M.S. "KING GEORGE V", Tuesday 27th day of May, 1941.
From, To, or At Sea

Time	Log (Stating type)	Distance Run through the Water: Miles	Distance Run through the Water: Tenths	True Course	Mean Revolutions per minute	Wind: Direction (true)	Wind: Force (0-12)	Weather and Visibility	Sea and Swell	Corrected Barometric Pressure in Millibars	Temperature (°F): Dry Bulb	Temperature (°F): Wet Bulb	Temperature (°F): Sea	LEAVE GRANTED TO SHIP'S COMPANY / REMARKS
														0030 Dec'd A to 19 knots.
0100	2394.1	19	7	030°	162.6									0045 Assumed 2nd degree of readiness.
0108		2	4	030°										0108 A/c 250°.
0122		4	2	250°										0122 A/c 270°.
0200	2412.6	11	2	270°	144									0221 A/c 220°
0221		6	7	270°										
0300	2431.6	12	4	220°	144									
0400	2451.5	19	2	220°	144	W	4	5	46	1010.0	52	48	57	
0411		3	3	220°										0411 A/c 190°
0500	2470.6	15	0	190°	144									
														0500 A/c 260°
0600	2490.8	19	4	260°	144									0545 Resumed 1st degree of readiness
0700	2511.3	19	7	260°	144									
0800	2527.5	15	6	VARS	144	NW	6	or 6	45	1009.0	53	47	57	0700 Screening destroyers parted company. 0718 A/c 180° 0723 A/c 150° 0737 A/c 060° 0750 A/c 140° 0759 A/c 105° 0901 A/c 090° 0905 Sighted "Norfolk" brg. 086° - 14 miles 0935 A/c 175° 0945 A/c 110°
0900	2547.1	18	6	VARS	145.1									0942 Sighted German BS "Bismarck" brg 97° - (24,000 yds) 0943 "Rodney" turned fine. 0948 King George V altered 2 pts to 20 0952 "Bismarck" altered 8 pts. Course and speed as req. to engage "Bismarck". "Bismarck" fired to 1st salvo on "Rodney" 0955 "Rodney" fired 1st salvo on "Bismarck"
1000	2565.7	17	8	As Req	145.9									1000 A/c and speed to close "Bismarck" "G" 3,000 yds
1025		6	9	As Req										1005 "Bismarck" abandoning ship 1021 Ceased Firing "Rodney" formed astern 1025 Course 015° Speed 12 kts
1040		4	1	015°										1031 "Bismarck" sunk 1035 Ceased fire 1040 Course 025° Assumed 3 degree of readiness
1100	2582.9	5	5	025°	137.6									
		17												
1200	2601.2	LB	5	026°	144	NW	6	cr 7	46	1007.0	54	49	58	1150 "Dorsetshire" joined company. Destroyers:- "Cossack", "Sikh", "Zulu", "Maori" joined screen



In the control room of the research ship *Star Hercules*, Dr Robert Ballard directs the photographic survey of the *Bismarck* which ended his two-year search for the wreck. After his first attempt ended in failure with the discovery of debris which proved to be of a still-unidentified 19th-century sailing vessel, he returned to the same area of the North Alantic — 600 miles west of Brest — in May 1989. His second attempt to find the *Bismarck* came during a return trip from the Mediterranean where Dr Ballard was using deep sea robots to explore underwater volcanoes and the remains of a Roman trading ship, sending live television pictures back to schoolchildren in the United States and Canada. The discovery of the *Bismarck* came 48 years, almost to the day, after the battle had been fought. 'I saw a lot of similarities to the *Titanic*,' said Dr Ballard after he had found the warship. 'The difficulty of the hunt, finding it upright and looking so elegant and well preserved.'

Although the various British warships had logged their positions in 1941, there was still an area of at least 120 square miles to search which was divided up into blocks of mile-long grids. For several days the underwater camera platform, the *Argo*, was towed at two miles per hour on the end of its 20,000-foot cable, back and forth, searching the seabed for any signs of wreckage. With computerised equipment plotting the precise position of the research vessel at all times from satellite navigation, some 1,700 metres from where HMS *Rodney* said the *Bismarck* had sunk, a mile-long trail of debris was picked up leading into a massive crater. Dr Ballard assumed he had found remains of the *Bismarck* and a press conference was prepared on his return to the United States. However, when Hagen Schemf, one of the German members of the team, showed the photographs which had been taken of the wreckage to Baron von Müllenheim-Rechburg, the *Bismarck*'s third gunnery officer, he had his doubts which were confirmed when he spotted a wooden rudder on one of the pictures. Dr Ballard admitted feeling awful: 'It was a bad summer,' he recalled.

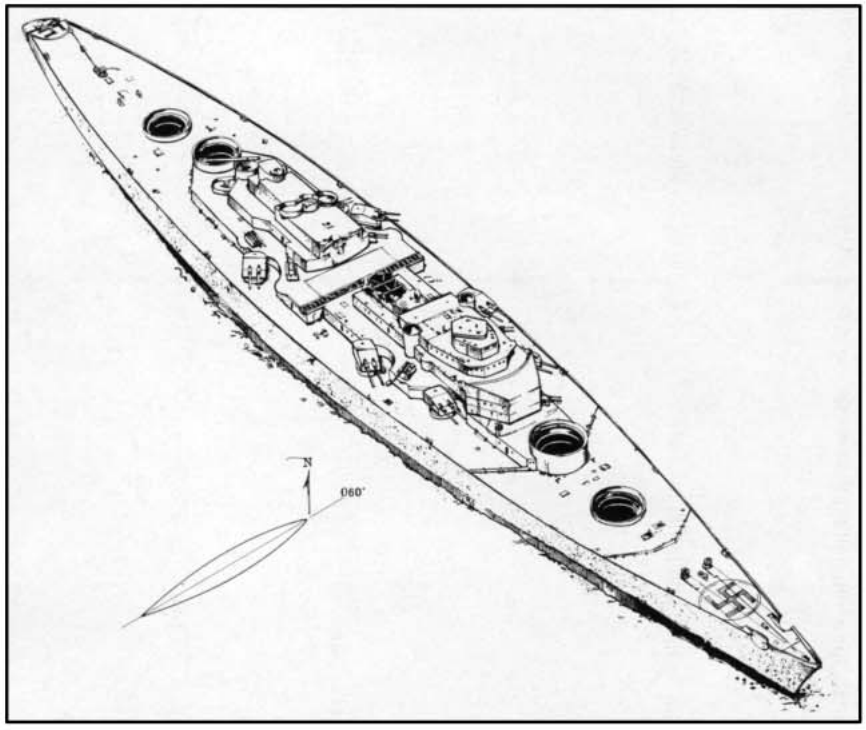
Nevertheless, undaunted, he went back to his sponsors — the Turner Broadcasting System Inc and the Quest Group Ltd, a group of private individuals interested in deep-sea exploration technology — and a further $1 million was forthcoming.

Forty-eight years after the fateful battle, Dr Ballard was once again over the spot, some 600 miles west of Brest (the port which the *Bismarck* was trying to reach) quartering the ocean floor.

'For the first two weeks we followed four separate debris trails that led to nothing,' said Ballard. However, on June 8, with time once again running out, the discovery of a massive turret which had fallen from the ship as it turned turtle, confirmed that they were at last nearing their quarry. Then came the sight that convinced the team that they had finally found the ship: a pair of anti-aircraft guns pointing straight at the camera.

Until 1985, most underwater exploration had been conducted using sonar, but Dr Ballard proved that the debris trail left by a sinking ship, often undetectable by sonar, was picked up more easily by visual means. The TV screens relayed images sent from wide-angle cameras mounted on the robot *Argo* which had been used to find the *Titanic*. The *Bismarck* find also further confirmed his belief in the usefulness of robots rather than manned submarines for deep-sea exploration. 'We were working in 16,000 feet of water,' explained Dr Ballard. 'If you were to go with a submarine it would take you roughly three hours to get down and three hours to get up each day. We were able to go down and spend days around the clock.'

Dr Ballard announced that he believed the condition of the *Bismarck* confirmed the theory that the ship went down after being scuttled by her crew, rather than sunk as a direct result of British fire. 'Only scuttled ships make it to the bottom in one piece.' Dr Ballard explained at his press conference that if a ship has not been scuttled (in other words, where compartments are still sealed), under those pressures it experiences catastrophic implosions. In the case of the *Bismarck*, it was clear to him that the ship was 'open' from end to end as there was no indication of this sort of damage. On the other hand, they were not able to view the area of the ship below the waterline, to determine what effect torpedoes had had on the ship, because it had settled deep in the mud. In addition, when the *Bismarck* went down, it rolled over and the four main gun turrets (which were seated by gravity only) fell out, thus opening four huge holes deep into the ship. These openings undoubtedly allowed huge amounts of water to penetrate deep inside the ship, thereby balancing the pressure. Thus, this also contributed to the lack of implosion damage. As can be seen from the National Geographic drawing, the ship rolled to an upright position as it descended (which Ballard said was typical in this type of sinking).



The *Bismarck* was resting on an even keel but all four main gun turrets complete with their twin 15-inch (380mm) guns, held in place only by gravity, were missing having fallen out in the three-mile-long plunge to the bottom.

At his press conference held in the offices of the National Geographic Society in Washington on June 22, Dr Ballard went to great lengths to point out that his was a scientific mission and he emphasised that they did not touch anything nor bring anything back. He pointed out that his research ship had British, Canadian and German representatives on board, and before they left the area a service had been held to remember those German — and British — seamen who had lost their lives during one of the great sea battles, and a wreath had been cast upon the sea in their memory.

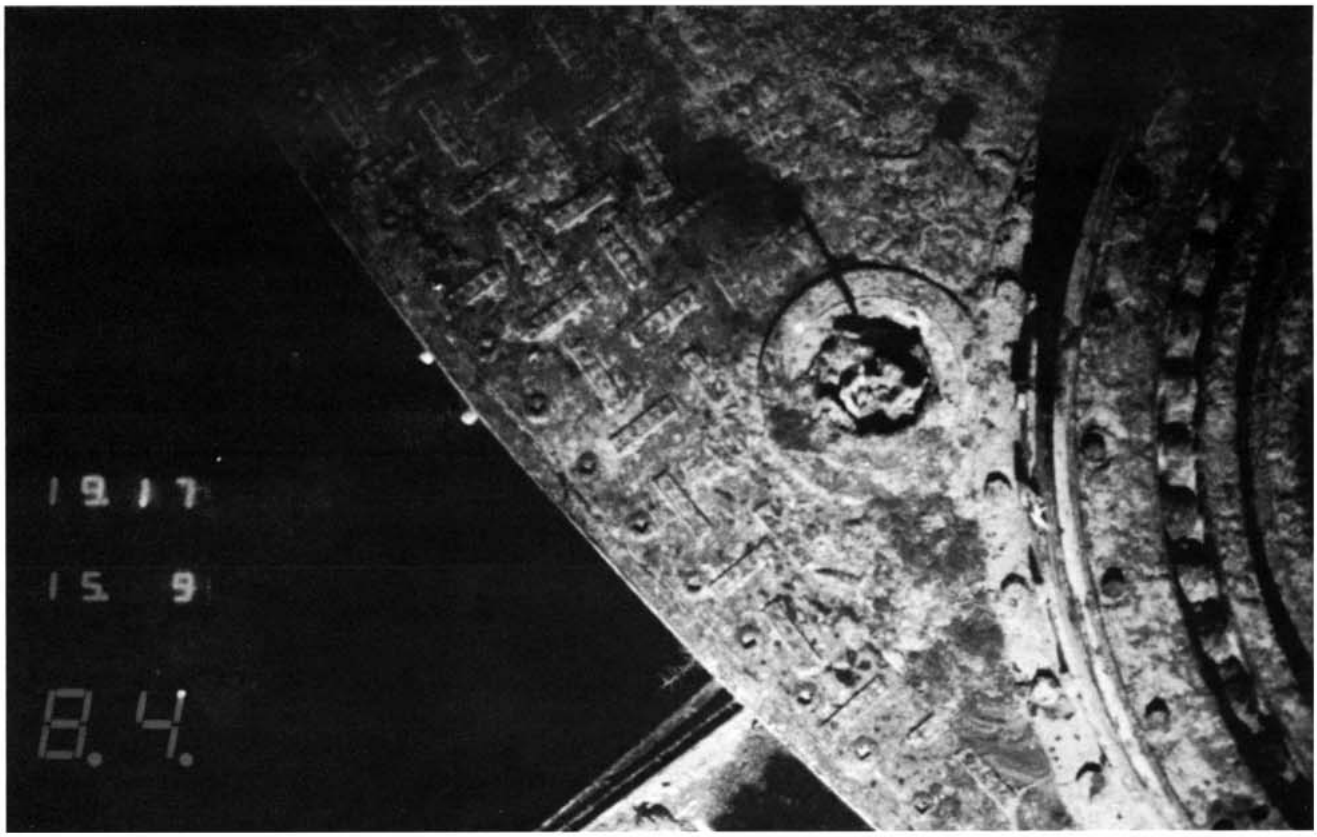
Dr Ballard explained that unlike civilian vessels, sunken warships remain the property of the nation concerned and thus the *Bismarck* was still owned by the German government. (He did not amplify as to which this might be — East or West!) Consequently he had sequestered the research vessel's log to protect the secret of the precise position of the ship which he said would only be given to the Germans if they requested it.

The ship was remarkably well preserved after 48 years in the deep ocean. At such depths shipwrecks are less susceptible to damage from marine creatures or wave and current action. Low temperatures also help to slow down the rate of deterioration.

No doubt this anti-aircraft gun was one of those which fired at the attacking Swordfish biplanes during their desperate attempts to carry out Churchill's imperative order: 'Sink the *Bismarck*!'

Ever conscious of the mindless disrespect accorded the *Titanic*, subsequently looted by a French expedition, Dr Ballard is very sensitive to any suggestion that he is a treasure hunter or grave robber:

'We did not go to plunder,' he said quite firmly. 'We have left it as a war grave but it provides a focus and excuse for retelling an incredible story that sits in books and which no one reads.'



This is the actual fire control station manned by the highest-ranking survivor of the *Bismarck*, Kapitänleutnant Freiherr Burkard von Müllenheim-Rechberg. He continued firing after the forward guns had been knocked out.

New York World-Telegram

7TH SPORTS FINAL
BOX SCORES
Latest Racing on Page 32.
PRICE THREE CENTS

SCRIPPS—HOWARD | VOL. 73.—NO. 279.—IN TWO SECTIONS—SECTION ONE | NEW YORK, TUESDAY, MAY 27, 1941. | Entered as second class matter Post Office, New York, N. Y.

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Local Forecast, 4:30 p. m.: Mostly cloudy and cooler tonight and tomorrow, with occasional showers.

BISMARCK IS SUNK

First Accounts Of Battle

By H. L. PERCY.
United Press Staff Correspondent.

LONDON, May 27.—Prime Minister Churchill set the usually staid Commons wild with excitement today when he announced that the Bismarck had been sunk.

Mr. Churchill had completed his statement on the war, telling of the pursuit of the Bismarck and promising that the warship soon would be finished off, and the House had passed on to other matters of routine business.

In the midst of these dull proceedings Mr. Churchill asked permission to interrupt. He rose to his feet, poker-faced, while a hush spread over the chamber.

He stood a moment and then began to read from a slip of paper.

"I don't know whether I might venture with great respect to intervene," he said, "but I have just received news that the Bismarck has been sunk."

Abruptly he sat down. Members of the House leaped from their seats cheering and waving order papers. They tossed hats into the air.

The scene was comparable in excitement only to the moment when the late Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain interrupted debate in 1938 to announce that Benito Mussolini had intervened and that he had been invited to meet with Adolf Hitler at Munich.

News of the sinking had been brought to Mr. Churchill by his parliamentary private secretary, Brendan Bracken, who hurried into the chamber while a member was speaking.

Mr. Bracken pushed his way through the members and came up behind Mr. Churchill, tapping the Prime Minister on the shoulder. Then he showed Mr. Churchill the slip of paper and the Prime Minister rose almost immediately with his announcement.

The news spread quickly and was brought to the news room of the Ministry of Information, where newspaper men cheered and clapped.

Indicative of the importance of the news, the British warship lifted its customary delay in transmitting news from a parliamentary sitting to allow correspondents to cable Mr. Churchill's statement immediately, but instructed newspaper men to attribute it to "high official quarters" for the time being.

Mr. Churchill told this story of the pursuit of the Bismarck:

"Wednesday last the new German battleship Bismarck and the new eight-inch gun cruiser Prince Eugen were descried by our air reconnaissance as at Bergen, and on Thursday it was known they had left.

"Many arrangements were made to intercept them should they attempt, as seemed probable, to break out into the Atlantic with a view to striking at our convoys from the United States, and during the night of the 23rd-24th our cruisers got visual contact with them as they were passing through the Denmark Strait between Iceland and Greenland.

"At dawn Saturday the Prince of Wales and the Hood intercepted these two enemy vessels. No detailed account

(Continued on Page Two.)

Admiralty Tells Of Chase at Sea

By the United Press.

LONDON, May 27.—The Admiralty recounted tonight how the epic sea encounter which ended today with the sinking of the Bismarck began last Friday in the Straits of Denmark between Greenland and Iceland.

The Admiralty's communique for the first time gave a detailed account of the entire action including the sinking of Britain's pride, the 42,100-ton Hood last Saturday.

It started, said the Admiralty, last Friday when the cruisers Norfolk and Suffolk, 10,000 and 9925 tons, respectively, sighted the Bismarck at a range of only six miles in the straits.

All through Friday night and early Saturday, said the Admiralty, the two British cruisers "shadowed" the great Nazi warship.

"Meanwhile other units of the Royal Navy," said the Admiralty, "were taking up dispositions at high speed with a view to intercepting the enemy and bringing him to action with our heavy forces.

"The range of the enemy was only six miles when first sighted and storms, snow, sleet patches and mist at times reduced visibility to one mile."

Saturday morning, said the Admiralty, the Hood and the 35,000-ton, newly constructed Prince of Wales contacted the Bismarck and "action was immediately joined."

The Bismarck, said the Admiralty, at one time was

(Continued on Page Three.)

Pacific Fleet 'Rumor'

By the Associated Press.

WASHINGTON, May 27.—Representative Keefe (R., Wis.) told the House today that "rumor has it," a large section of the Pacific Fleet recently passed through the Panama Canal. He speculated whether President Roosevelt would tell the nation tonight that the fleet would be used for convoying.

Struck by Plane

By the United Press.

LAFAYETTE, Ind., May 27.—Robert T. Black, 26, West Lafayette, was injured fatally today when he was struck by a low-flying Civil Aeronautics training ship piloted by Allen H. Edward, 19, son of Mal Edward, Purdue University's athletic director. The plane did not crash.

The Weather

(Official United States Forecast.)

New York and Metropolitan Area—Mostly cloudy and cooler tonight and tomorrow, with occasional showers; fresh to strong west winds.

New Jersey—Mostly cloudy tonight and tomorrow, with local showers and thunderstorms tomorrow and in north portions tonight; cooler tomorrow.

TODAY'S READINGS.

	Temp.		Temp.
Midnight	63	8 a. m.	71
1 a. m.	63	9 a. m.	74
2 a. m.	62	10 a. m.	81
3 a. m.	62	11 a. m.	83
4 a. m.	62	Noon	85
5 a. m.	62	1 p. m.	87
6 a. m.	63	2 p. m.	87
7 a. m.	65	3 p. m.	87
8 a. m.	68	4 p. m.	87

Additional weather data on Page 2.

The Bismarck... Battle Victim

A. P. Radiophoto.

Roosevelt Lengthens Tonight's Talk

By the United Press.

LONDON, May 27.—United States Ambassador John G. Winant will fly to the United States before the end of the week to discuss the war situation with President Roosevelt. Mr. Winant will be accompanied by Ben Cohen, Embassy adviser and New Deal brain truster.

By LYLE C. WILSON,
United Press Staff Correspondent.

WASHINGTON, May 27.—Stephen Early, White House secretary, announced today that President Roosevelt's fireside chat tonight will be extended 15 minutes longer than previously anticipated to 45 minutes. It will begin at 10:30 p. m., New York time.

"On the speech," Mr. Early said, "I think you can say that by Wednesday morning there will no longer be any doubt as to what the national policy of this government is."

Mr. Early asked radio networks, which previously had granted the President 30 minutes for tonight's address, to give him an additional 15 minutes. He explained that as the speech was being completed the President found that he could not compress what he wants to say into half an hour.

Accordingly, Mr. Early said, the

(Continued on Page Sixteen.)

Weiner Jailed

By the United Press.

HOLLYWOOD, May 27.—Eugene Weiner, husband of actress Lillian Roth, today was sentenced to serve six months in the County Jail for blackening Miss Roth's eye last February.

500 Planes Rained Bombs On British Fleet Off Crete

English Seamen Machine-gunned While Struggling in Water

By GRATTAN P. McGROARTY.
United Press Staff Correspondent.

ABOARD A BRITISH BATTLESHIP OFF CRETE, May 23 (Delayed).—A powerful British battle fleet, with guns spouting death at probably 500 German warplanes, came through the Straits of Kithera off Western Crete today under the fiercest 14-hour aerial attack of the war.

Seamen on the battleship from which I watched the duel between air and sea power cursed and shook their fists as Nazi bombers, racing in for the kill after blasting a British destroyer, dumped bombs among seamen struggling in the water and then swooped down with machine guns going.

The destroyer—admittedly a fair military target—was burning in the middle and pouring out great clouds of smoke after a hit aft apparently blew up a magazine and set flames sweeping from her funnel to the stern.

The destroyer was only one of the casualties suffered by the navy after it went through the Straits to rescue two cruisers engaged in

(Continued on Page Sixteen.)

Nazis Report Sinking 14 Ships Off Africa

By the Associated Press.

BERLIN, May 27. — Fourteen "heavily laden enemy merchantmen, totalling 77,000 tons," have been sunk "in waters west of Africa" by German submarines, the High Command announced today.

Informed sources indicated the sinkings have occurred during the last few days.

Rickenbacker Stays in Hospital

By the United Press.

ATLANTA, May 27.—Plane crash injuries suffered three months ago will keep Capt. Eddie V. Rickenbacker, president of Eastern Airlines, in Piedmont Hospital here several weeks longer, his physicians said today.

Cooler Tonight, Then Showers

It's a bit warm today, with the temperature in the 80s, but it will be cooler tonight and tomorrow and there will be occasional showers. Either tonight or tomorrow night, except for the showers, should be a pleasant night for a date with a sabbatical blonde.

Police Save Pilot And Seaplane

Taxiing toward a ramp of the Edo Aircraft Corp., at Flushing Bay and 14th Ave., in College Point, today, Jack Edwards, piloting a seaplane, was tossed into the bay when a strong wind struck the plane and capsized it about 200 feet off the ramp.

The plane was partly submerged, but Mr. Edwards managed to cling to a wing until a police launch came out and picked him up. The launch then towed the plane to the ramp. Mr. Edwards, who lives at 67 Euclid Ave., Brooklyn, was alone in the plane.

British Reinforce Troops in Crete

Hear 18,000 Nazis Have Been Killed

By EDWARD W. BEATTIE, JR.
United Press Staff Correspondent.

LONDON, May 27.—Reinforced German air troops smashed deeper into British lines today in fierce fighting in western Crete, but official statements said that imperial reinforcements were reaching the island and that all Axis sea-borne landings had been smashed by the Royal Navy with heavy losses.

[The British, according to an Associated Press dispatch from Cairo, said heavy losses still were being inflicted on the Germans in fierce hand-to-hand fighting, and Greek sources placed the number of Nazi dead at 18,000.]

While admitting the sinking of two British cruisers and four destroyers, the Admiralty said that most of the crews had been saved and that British submarines had sunk two caiques (Greek fishing boats) laden with German troops and two E boats (torpedo speed boats) in addition to two troop

(Continued on Page Sixteen.)

World-Telegram Index

	Page
Advertising News	37
Amusements	18 and 19
Books, Harry Hansen	23
Bridge	24
Broadway, by George Ross	18
Camera News	24
Comics, Crossword Puzzle	24
Editorials, Talbott Cartoon	22
Eleanor Roosevelt	21
Ernie Pyle	21
Events in New York	24
Finance	34 to 38
Food Directory	27 and 28
Hugh S. Johnson	21
Joe Williams	29
Johnstone Cartoon	21
Mary Wells Ridley	25
Metropolitan Movies	23
Music	23
Obituaries	33
Radio, Alice Cook	33
Raymond Clapper	21
Real Estate	38
Shipping	33
Society	26
Sports	29 to 33
Theaters, Sidney Whipple	18
Tips on Tables	18
Today's War Moves	4
Want Ads	38 and 39
Westbrook Pegler	21
William Philip Simms	21
Woman's Page	25

Torpedoed, Shelled by Vast Fleet

By NED RUSSELL.
United Press Staff Correspondent.

LONDON, May 27.—British aerial torpedoes and naval shells today sank the 35,000-ton pride of the Nazi navy, the battleship Bismarck, after a 72-hour pack hunt in which a great part of Britain's battleship force was engaged, seeking vengeance upon the dreadnaught which sank the great British battle cruiser Hood.

Upward of 1500 men perhaps died with the Bismarck.

The Bismarck went down at 11 a. m. (5 a. m. New York time).

By the Associated Press.

BERLIN, May 27.—The Bismarck's last message, the High Command said today, indicated she was surrounded by overwhelming enemy forces and so badly crippled she could not maneuver. It read:

"Ship unable to maneuver. We are fighting to the last shell. Long live the Fuehrer."

The Bismarck was accompanied by the Prince Eugen, a new 10,000-ton cruiser, when the action between British and Nazi naval forces first commenced Saturday. It was announced that measures to finish off the cruiser—which left the company of the Bismarck before the final action—are being taken.

[In contrast, Berlin said that Nazi planes are "attacking" the British naval units which sank the Bismarck. In contradiction, apparently, of this claim and of German and British announcements that the Bismarck was sunk 400 miles west of Brest, France, Prime Minister Churchill told Commons that the Bismarck was beyond the range of German convoy bombers, based on French airdromes, when it was sunk.]

HUGE FORCE MOBILIZED.

The Prince Eugen is one of the three ships of the Admiral Hipper class, newest and strongest of Germany's cruisers.

It was disclosed that an American made plane, a Consolidated bomber, called here a Catalina, had picked up the Bismarck shortly before midday yesterday, apparently making desperately for Brest or St. Nazaire on the French invasion coast.

Details of the three-day sea drama which started in the blizzard-swept Denmark Straits between Greenland and Iceland last Friday night and ended this morning were made public by the Admiralty and Prime Minister Churchill.

The Admiralty made no announcement of the fate of Admiral Guenther Luetjens and his estimated personnel of 1500 officers and men aboard the Bismarck. The Admiralty said it had not yet received complete information on the final hours of the Bismarck, but it seemed likely that at least some survivors had been picked up by the many British warships in the vicinity.

TWO AIRCRAFT CARRIERS USED.

[In Berlin authorized quarters refused to comment on questions concerning survivors, saying that this was military information and they could not go beyond the Nazi High Command's announcement.]

The Admiralty revealed that emergency orders had mobilized a huge naval force to run down and kill the Bismarck after word crackled through by wireless that the Hood had been sunk in the first encounter with the Bismarck Saturday morning.

The coup de grace was delivered upon the Bismarck, the Admiralty revealed, by the 9975-ton cruiser Dorsetshire, which was ordered to close in and sink the Nazi battleship with torpedoes after she had been crippled and virtually put out of action by heavy ships of the Royal Navy and devastating aerial torpedo attacks.

The Admiralty revealed that the Bismarck was run

(Continued on Page Two.)

Workers Themselves Favor Ban On Defense Strikes, Fortune Finds

Opposition to strikes in defense industries is so strong in the United States that even factory workers and union members favor governmental prohibition of strikes in such industries, the Fortune Survey of Public Opinion will disclose tomorrow.

No matter what the issue—whether working conditions, hours, wages, the closed shop, or union rivalries — factory labor overwhelmingly indicated an aversion to strikes in defense industries, the survey will reveal, but the general public and labor agree that strikes for any of these reasons should be permitted in non-defense industries.

The survey, which will be printed in full in the June issue of Fortune Magazine, was made with three different cross-sections of 2500 persons. The first group was asked unbiased questions, the second was asked questions with union bias and the third answered queries with anti-union bias.

It made no difference, the magazine found. So strong was the opposition to strikes in those industries upon which national preparedness depend that the opinions of the second group were almost as heavily against strikes as those in the first cross-section.

The three groups were also asked questions about strikes in non-defense factories and it was found, the survey will state, that even here factory and other labor opinion favored compulsory settlements by even larger majorities than the 67.4 per cent of the general public.

Of the five issues over which

(Continued on Page Four.)

Only selected pictures taken by Dr Ballard have been released by the Quest Group Ltd which holds the copyright. For more we must therefore await the publication, in September 1990, of Dr Ballard's new book, *The Discovery of the Bismarck*.

Cora